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THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

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HISTORY

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PREFACE.

IT is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety, or the importance of the ſubject, which I have undertaken to treat; ſince the merit of the choice would ſerve to render the weakneſs of the execution ſtill more apparent, and ſtill leſs excuſable. But as I have preſumed to lay before the Public a *firſt* volume only of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I ſhould explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable ſeries of revolutions, which, in the courſe of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length deſtroyed, the ſolid fabric of Roman greatneſs, may, with ſome propriety, be divided into the three following periods.

I. The firſt of theſe periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Ro-

man monarchy, having attained its full ſtrength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the ſubverſion of the Weſtern Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude anceſtors of the moſt poliſhed nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which ſubjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the ſixth century.

II. The ſecond period of the Decline and Fall of Rome, may be ſuppoſed to commence with the reign of Juſtinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, reſtored a tranſient ſplendour to the Eaſtern Empire. It will comprehend the invaſion of Italy by the Lombards; the conqueſt of the Aſiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people againſt the feeble princes of Conſtantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, eſtabliſhed the ſecond, or German Empire of the weſt.

III. The

III. The laſt and longeſt of theſe periods includes about ſix centuries and a half; from the revival of the Weſtern Empire, till the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to aſſume the titles of Cæſar and Auguſtus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a ſingle city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long ſince forgotten. The writer who ſhould undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himſelf obliged to enter into the general hiſtory of the Cruſades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would ſcarcely be able to reſtrain his curioſity from making ſome inquiry into the ſtate of the city of Rome, during the darkneſs and confuſion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too haſtily, to commit to the preſs, a work, which, in every ſenſe of the word, deſerves the epithet of imperfect, I conſider myſelf as contracting an engagement to finiſh, moſt probably in a ſecond volume, the firſt of theſe

memorable periods; and to deliver to the Public, the complete hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines, to the ſubverſion of the Weſtern Empire. With regard to the ſubſequent periods, though I may entertain ſome hopes, I dare not preſume to give any aſſurances. The execution of the extenſive plan which I have deſcribed, would connect the ancient and modern hiſtory of the World; but it would require many years of health, of leiſure, and of perſeverance.

BENTINCK-STREET,
February 1, 1776.

P. S. The entire Hiſtory, which is now publiſhed, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the Weſt, abundantly diſcharges my engagements with the Public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to proſecute a work, which, however laborious it may ſeem, is the moſt agreeable occupation of my leiſure hours.

BENTINCK-STREET,
March 1, 1781.

An Author eaſily perſuades himſelf that the public opinion is ſtill favourable to his labours; and I have now embraced the ſerious reſolution of proceeding to the laſt period of my original deſign, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, in the year one thouſand four hundred and fifty-three. The moſt patient Reader, who computes that three ponderous volumes have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long proſpect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the ſame minuteneſs on the whole ſeries of the Byzantine hiſtory. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Juſtinian, and the conqueſts of the Mahometans, will deſerve and detain our attention, and the laſt age of Conſtantinople (the Cruſades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the ſeventh to the eleventh century, the obſcure interval will be ſupplied by a conciſe narrative of ſuch facts, as may ſtill appear either intereſting or important.

BENTINCK-STREET,
March 1, 1782.

ADVERTISEMENT.

DILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an hiſtorical writer may aſcribe to himſelf; if any merit indeed can be aſſumed from the performance of an indiſpenſable duty. I may therefore be allowed to ſay, that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illuſtrate the ſubject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extenſive deſign which has been ſketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors conſulted during the progreſs of the whole work; and however ſuch an attempt might incur the cenſure of oſtentation, I am perſuaded, that it would be ſuſceptible of entertainment as well as information.

At preſent I ſhall content myſelf with a ſingle obſervation. The Biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Conſtantine, compoſed, or rather compiled, the lives of the Emperors, from Hadrian to the ſons of Carus, are uſually mentioned under the names of Ælius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Ælius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiſcus. But there is ſo much perplexity in the titles of the MSS.; and ſo many diſputes have ariſen among the critics (ſee Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. l. iii. c. 6.) concerning their number, their names, and their reſpective property, that for the moſt part I have quoted them without diſtinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Auguſtan Hiſtory*.

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THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAP. I.

The Extent and Military Force of the Empire in the Age of the Antonines.

CHAP. I. Introduction.

IN the ſecond century of the Chriſtian Æra, the empire of Rome comprehended the faireſt part of the earth, and the moſt civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extenſive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and diſciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abuſed the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free conſtitution was preſerved with decent reverence: The Roman ſenate appeared to poſſeſs the ſovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourſcore years, the public adminiſtration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the deſign of this, and of the two ſucceeding chapters, to deſcribe the proſperous condition of their ~~empire~~; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus,

A. D. 98—180.

† Should I not have given the history of that fortunate period which was interposed between two Iron ages? Should I not have deduced the decline of the Empire from the civil Wars, that ensued after the fall of Nero or even from the tyranny which succeeded the reign of Augustus? Alas! I should: but of what avail is this tardy knowledge?

N times

Where error is irrevocable, repentance is useless.

CHAP. I.

Antoninus, ~~to deduce the moſt important circumſtances of its decline and fall; a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is ſtill felt by the nations of the earth~~.

Moderation of Auguſtus.

The principal conqueſts of the Romans were atchieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the moſt part, were ſatisfied with preſerving thoſe dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the ſenate, the active emulation of the conſuls, and the martial enthuſiaſm of the people. The ſeven firſt centuries were filled with a rapid ſucceſſion of triumphs; but it was reſerved for Auguſtus, to relinquiſh the ambitious deſign of ſubduing the whole earth, and to introduce a ſpirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and ſituation, it was eaſy for him to diſcover, that Rome, in her preſent exalted ſituation, had much leſs to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the proſecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the poſſeſſion more precarious, and leſs beneficial. The experience of Auguſtus added weight to theſe ſalutary reflections, and effectually convinced him, that, by the prudent vigour of his counſels, it would be eaſy to ſecure every conceſſion, which the ſafety or the dignity of Rome might require from the moſt formidable barbarians. Inſtead of expoſing his perſon and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the reſtitution of the ſtandards and priſoners which had been taken in the defeat of Craſſus[1].

His generals, in the early part of his reign, atttempted the reduction of Æthiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thouſand miles to the ſouth of the tropic; but the heat of the climate ſoon repelled the invaders, and protected the unwarlike natives of

[1] Dion Caſſius (l. liv. p. 736.), with the annotations of Reymar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the ſubject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Auguſtus recorded his own exploits, aſſerts that *he compelled* the Parthians to reſtore the enſigns of Craſſus.

CHAP. I.

those sequestered regions[2]. The northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expence and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of fortune[3]. On the death of that emperor, his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits, which Nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries[+]; on the west the Atlantic ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa[4].

+ Incertum metu an per invidiam (Tacit. Annal. I. 11) Why must rational advice be imputed to a base or foolish motive? To what cause, error, malevolence or flattery shall I ascribe this unworthy alternative? Was the historian dazzled by Trajan's conquests?

Imitated by his successors.

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus, was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Cæsars seldom shewed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer, that those triumphs which *their* indolence neglected, should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent in-

[2] Strabo (l. xvi. p. 780.), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. l. vi. c. 32. 35.), and Dion Cassius (l. liii. p. 723. and l. liv. p. 734.), have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (see Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52.). They were arrived within three days journey of the Spice country, the rich object of their invasion.

[3] By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23. and Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 117, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.

[4] Tacit. Annal. l. ii. Dion Cassius, l. lvi. p. 833, and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Cæsars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim.

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vaſion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as intereſt, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intruſted to his care, without aſpiring to conqueſts which might have proved no leſs fatal to himſelf than to the vanquiſhed barbarians[5].

Conqueſt of Britain was the firſt exception to it.

The only acceſſion which the Roman empire received, during the firſt century of the Chriſtian Æra, was the province of Britain. In this ſingle inſtance the ſucceſſors of Cæſar and Auguſtus were perſuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its ſituation to the coaſt of Gaul ſeemed to invite their arms; the pleaſing, though doubtful intelligence of a pearl fiſhery, attracted their avarice[6]; and as Britain was viewed in the light of a diſtinct and inſulated world, the conqueſt ſcarcely formed any exception to the general ſyſtem of continental meaſures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the moſt ſtupid[7], maintained by the moſt diſſolute, and terminated by the moſt timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the iſland ſubmitted to the Roman yoke[8]. The various tribes of Britons poſſeſſed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the ſpirit of union. They took up arms with ſavage fierceneſs; they laid them down, or turned them againſt each other with wild inconſtancy; and while they fought ſingly, they were ſucceſſively ſubdued. Neither the fortitude of

[5] Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola, were checked and recalled in the courſe of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expreſſed by Tacitus, was, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, *imperatoria virtus*.

[6] Cæſar himſelf conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The Britiſh pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus obſerves, with reaſon (in Agricola, c. 12.), that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deeſſe quam nobis avaritiam."

[7] Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expreſſed by Pomponius Mela, l. iii. c. 6. (he wrote under Claudius) that, by the ſucceſs of the Roman arms, the iſland and its ſavage inhabitants would ſoon be better known. It is amuſing enough to peruſe ſuch paſſages in the midſt of London.

[8] See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, and copiouſly, though perhaps not completely, illuſtrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horſley.

Caractacus,

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Caractacus, nor the deſpair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticiſm of the Druids, could avert the ſlavery of their country, or reſiſt the ſteady progreſs of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was diſgraced by the weakeſt, or the moſt vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inſpired; his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, diſplayed the Roman arms round every part of the iſland. The conqueſt of Britain was conſidered as already atchieved; and it was the deſign of Agricola to complete and enſure his ſucceſs by the eaſy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were ſufficient[9]. The weſtern iſle might be improved into a valuable poſſeſſion, and the Britons would wear their chains with the leſs reluctance, if the proſpect and example of freedom was on every ſide removed from before their eyes.

But the ſuperior merit of Agricola ſoon occaſioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever diſappointed this rational, though extenſive ſcheme of conqueſt. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for ſecurity as well as for dominion. He had obſerved, that the iſland is almoſt divided into two unequal parts by the oppoſite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Acroſs the narrow interval of about forty miles, he had drawn a line of military ſtations, which was afterwards fortified in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart erected on foundations of ſtone[10]. This wall of Antoninus, at a ſmall diſtance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glaſ-

[9] The Iriſh writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occaſion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.

[10] See Horſley's Britannia Romana, l. i. c. 10.

gow,

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gow, was fixed at the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preſerved in the northern extremity of the iſland their wild independence, for which they were not leſs indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incurſions were frequently repelled and chaſtiſed; but their country was never ſubdued [11]. The maſters of the faireſt and moſt wealthy climates of the globe, turned with contempt from gloomy hills aſſailed by the winter tempeſt, from lakes concealed in a blue miſt, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the foreſt were chaſed by a troop of naked barbarians [12].

Conqueſt of Dacia; the ſecond exception.

Such was the ſtate of the Roman frontiers, and ſuch the maxims of Imperial policy from the death of Auguſtus to the acceſſion of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a ſoldier, and poſſeſſed the talents of a general [13]. The peaceful ſyſtem of his predeceſſors was interrupted by ſcenes of war and conqueſt; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The firſt exploits of Trajan were againſt the Dacians, the moſt warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had inſulted with impunity the Majeſty of Rome [14]. To the ſtrength and fierceneſs of barbarians, they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm perſuaſion of the immortality and tranſmigration of the ſoul [15]. † Decebalus, the Dacian King, approved himſelf a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he deſpair of his own and the public

† Julian aſsigns this Theological cause of whose power he himself might be conscious [Cæsares p 327.] Yet I am not assured that the Religion of Zamolxis subsisted in the time of Trajan; or that his Dacians were the same people with the Getæ of Herodotus. The transmigration of the Soul has been believed by many ~~other~~ nations, warlike as the Celts, or pusillanimous like the Hindoos. When speculative opinion is ~~the~~ kindled into practical enthusiasm, its operation will be determined by the previous character of the man or the nation.

[11] The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and ſpirit (ſee his Sylvæ v.), the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the ſingle teſtimony of Richard of Cirenceſter was ſufficient to create a Roman province of Veſpaſiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

[12] See Appian (in Proæm.) and the uniform imagery of Oſſian's Poems, which, according to every hypotheſis, were compoſed by a native Caledonian.

[13] See Pliny's Panegyric, which ſeems founded on facts.

[14] Dion Caſſius, l. lxvii.

[15] Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Cæſars, with Spanheim's obſervations.

fortune,

fortune, till, by the confeſſion of his enemies, he had exhauſted every reſource both of valour and policy[16]. This memorable war, with a very ſhort ſuſpenſion of hoſtilities, laſted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without controul, the whole force of the ſtate, it was terminated by an abſolute ſubmiſſion of the barbarians[17]. The new province of Dacia, which formed a ſecond exception to the precept of Auguſtus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Nieſter, the Teyſs, or Tibiſcus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The veſtiges of a military road may ſtill be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern hiſtory, and the actual frontier of the Turkiſh and Ruſſian empires[18].

Conqueſts of Trajan in the eaſt.

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind ſhall continue to beſtow more liberal applauſe on their deſtroyers than on their benefactors,† the thirſt of military glory will ever be the vice of the moſt exalted characters. The praiſes of Alexander, tranſmitted by a ſucceſſion of poets and hiſtorians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him the Roman emperor undertook an expedition againſt the nations of the eaſt, but he lamented with a ſigh, that his advanced age ſcarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the ſon of Philip[19]. Yet the ſucceſs of Trajan, however tranſient, was rapid and ſpecious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by inteſtine diſcord, fled before his arms. He deſcended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Perſian gulph. He enjoyed the honour of being the firſt, as he was the laſt, of the Roman generals, who

† The firſt place in the temple of fame is due and is aſſigned to the ſucceſsful heroes who had ſtruggled with adverſity; who, after ſignalizing their valour in the deliverance of their country have diſplayed their wiſdom and virtue in the foundation or government of a flouriſhing ſtate. Such men as Moſes, Cyrus, Alfred, Guſtavus Vaſa, Henry iv of France &c.

[16] Plin. Epiſt. viii. 9.

[17] Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii. p. 1123. 1131. Julian in Cæſaribus. Eutropius, viii. 2. 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.

[18] See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the Province of Dacia, in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 444—468.

[19] Trajan's ſentiments are repreſented in a very juſt and lively manner in the Cæſars of Julian.

minds. Late generations, and far diſtant climates may impute their calamities to the immortal author of the Iliad. The ſpirit of Alexander was inflamed by the praiſes of Achilles; and ſucceeding Heroes have been ambitious to tread in the footſteps of Alexander.

Like him the Emperor Trajan ever aſpired to the conqueſt of the Eaſt; but the Roman lamented with a ſigh &c

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ever navigated that remote ſea. His fleets ravaged the coaſts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himſelf that he was approaching towards the confines of India [20]. Every day the aſtoniſhed ſenate received the intelligence of new names and new nations, that acknowledged his ſway. They were informed that the kings of Boſphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Oſrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himſelf, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria, were reduced into the ſtate of provinces [21]. But the death of Trajan ſoon clouded the ſplendid proſpect; and it was juſtly to be dreaded, that ſo many diſtant nations would throw off the unaccuſtomed yoke, when they were no longer reſtrained by the powerful hand which had impoſed it.

Reſigned by his ſucceſſor Adrian.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who preſided over boundaries, and was repreſented according to the faſhion of that age by a large ſtone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refuſed to yield his place to Jupiter himſelf. A favourable inference was drawn from his obſtinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs, as a ſure preſage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede [22]. During many ages, the prediction, as it is uſual, contributed to its own accompliſhment. But though Terminus had reſiſted the majeſty of Jupiter, he ſubmitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian [23]. The reſignation of all the eaſtern conqueſts

[20] Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illuſion. See a very ſenſible diſſertation of M. Freret in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55.

[21] Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii; and the Abbreviators.

[22] Ovid. Faſt. l. ii. ver. 667. See Livy, and Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, under the reign of Tarquin.

[23] St. Auguſtin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakneſs of Terminus, and the vanity of the Augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv. 29.

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of Trajan was the firſt meaſure of his reign. He reſtored to the Parthians the election of an independent Sovereign, withdrew the Roman garriſons from the provinces of Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria, and, in compliance with the precept of Auguſtus, once more eſtabliſhed the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire[24]. Cenſure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has aſcribed to envy, a conduct, which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meaneſt and the moſt generous ſentiments, may afford ſome colour to the ſuſpicion. It was, however, ſcarcely in his power to place the ſuperiority of his predeceſſor in a more conſpicuous light, than by thus confeſſing himſelf unequal to the taſk of defending the conqueſts of Trajan.

Contraſt of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

The martial and ambitious ſpirit of Trajan, formed a very ſingular contraſt with the moderation of his ſucceſſor. The reſtleſs activity of Hadrian was not leſs remarkable, when compared with the gentle repoſe of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almoſt a perpetual journey; and as he poſſeſſed the various talents of the ſoldier, the ſtateſman, and the ſcholar, he gratified his curioſity in the diſcharge of his duty. Careleſs of the difference of ſeaſons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the ſnows of Caledonia, and the ſultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire, which, in the courſe of his reign, was not honoured with the preſence of the monarch[25]. But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was ſpent in the boſom of

[24] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 5. Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomiſers. It is ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that this memorable event ſhould be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin.

[25] Dion, l. lxix. p. 1158. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 5. 8. If all our hiſtorians were loſt, medals, inſcriptions, and other monuments, would be ſufficient to record the travels of Hadrian.

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Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public adminiſtration, the longeſt journies of that amiable prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome, to the retirement of his Lanuvian Villa [26].

Pacific ſyſtem of Hadrian and the two Antonines.

Notwithſtanding this difference in their perſonal conduct, the general ſyſtem of Auguſtus was equally adopted and uniformly purſued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They perſiſted in the deſign of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendſhip of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind, that the Roman power, raiſed above the temptation of conqueſt, was actuated only by the love of order and juſtice. During a long period of forty-three years their virtuous labours were crowned with ſucceſs; and if we except a few ſlight hoſtilities that ſerved to exerciſe the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair proſpect of univerſal peace [27]. The Roman name was revered among the moſt remote nations of the earth. The fierceſt barbarians frequently ſubmitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a cotemporary hiſtorian, that he had ſeen ambaſſadors who were refuſed the honour which they came to ſolicit, of being admitted into the rank of ſubjects [28].

Defenſive wars of Marcus Antoninus.

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors. They preſerved peace by a conſtant preparation for war; and while juſtice regulated their conduct, they

[26] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory and the Epitomes.

[27] We muſt, however, remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a ſingle province: Pauſanias (l. viii. c. 43.) mentions two neceſſary and ſucceſsful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius. 1ſt, Againſt the wandering Moors, who were driven into the ſolitudes of Atlas. 2d; Againſt the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both theſe wars (with ſeveral other hoſtilities) are mentioned in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 19.

[28] Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his Hiſtory of the Roman wars.

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announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little diſpoſed to endure, as to offer an injury. The military ſtrength, which it had been ſufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to diſplay, was exerted againſt the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hoſtilities of the barbarians provoked the reſentment of that philoſophic monarch, and, in the proſecution of a juſt defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many ſignal victories, both on the Euphrates, and on the Danube [29]. The military eſtabliſhment of the Roman empire, which thus aſſured either its tranquillity or ſucceſs, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

Military eſtabliſhment of the Roman emperors.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the uſe of arms was reſerved for thoſe ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and ſome ſhare in enacting thoſe laws, which it was their intereſt, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was loſt in extent of conqueſt, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade [30]. The legions themſelves, even at the time when they were recruited in the moſt diſtant provinces, were ſuppoſed to conſiſt of Roman citizens. That diſtinction was generally conſidered, either as a legal qualification, or as a proper recompence for the ſoldier; but a more ſerious regard was paid to the eſſential merit of age, ſtrength, and military ſtature [31]. In all levies, a juſt preference was given to the climates of the North over thoſe of the South: the race of men born

[29] Dion, l. lxxi. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible hiſtorians, whoſe memory has been reſcued from oblivion, and expoſed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticiſm of Lucian.

[30] The pooreſt rank of ſoldiers poſſeſſed above forty pounds ſterling (Dionyſ. Halicarn. iv. 17.), a very high qualification, at a time when money was ſo ſcarce, that an ounce of ſilver was equivalent to ſeventy pound weight of braſs. The populace, excluded by the ancient conſtitution, were indiſcriminately admitted by Marius. See Salluſt. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91.

[31] Cæſar formed his legion Alauda, of Gauls and ſtrangers: but it was during the licence of civil war; and after the victory, he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

+ The diſtinction of North and South is real and intelligible; and our purſuit is terminated on either ſide by the poles of the Earth. But the difference of East and West is arbitrary, and ſhifts round the globe. As the men of the North not of

C 2 the West the legions of Gaul and Germany were ſuperior to the ſouth-eaſtern natives of Aſia and Egypt. It is the triumph of cold over heat; which may be conceived and has been ſurmounted by moral cauſes.

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to the exerciſe of arms, was ſought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reaſonably preſumed, that the hardy occupations of ſmiths, carpenters, and huntſmen, would ſupply more vigour and reſolution, than the ſedentary trades which are employed in the ſervice of luxury[32]. After every qualification of property had been laid aſide, the armies of the Roman emperors were ſtill commanded, for the moſt part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common ſoldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meaneſt, and very frequently from the moſt profligate, of mankind.

Diſcipline.

That public virtue which among the ancients was denominated patriotiſm, is derived from a ſtrong ſenſe of our own intereſt in the preſervation and proſperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a ſentiment, which had rendered the religions of the republic almoſt invincible, could make but a very feeble impreſſion on the mercenary ſervants of a deſpotic prince; and it became neceſſary to ſupply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not leſs forcible nature; honour and religion. The peaſant, or mechanic, imbibed the uſeful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profeſſion of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour: and that, although the proweſs of a private ſoldier muſt often eſcape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might ſometimes confer glory or diſgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whoſe honours he was aſſociated. On his firſt entrance into the ſervice, an oath was adminiſtered to him, with every circumſtance of ſolemnity. He promiſed never to deſert his ſtandard, to ſubmit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to ſacrifice his life for the ſafety of the emperor and the empire[33]. The attachment of the Roman troops to their ſtandards,

[32] See Vegetius de Re Militari, l. i. c. 2—7.

[33] The oath of ſervice and fidelity to the emperor, was annually renewed by the troops, on the firſt of January.

was inſpired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondeſt devotion; nor was it eſteemed leſs impious, than it was ignominious, to abandon that ſacred enſign in the hour of danger [34]. Theſe motives, which derived their ſtrength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more ſubſtantial kind. Regular pay, occaſional donatives, and a ſtated recompence, after the appointed time of ſervice, alleviated the hardſhips of the military life [35], whilſt, on the other hand, it was impoſſible for cowardice or diſobedience to eſcape the ſevereſt puniſhment. The centurions were authorized to chaſtiſe with blows, the generals had a right to puniſh with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman diſcipline, that a good ſoldier ſhould dread his officers far more than the enemy. From ſuch laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmneſs and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular paſſions of barbarians.

Exerciſes.

And yet ſo ſenſible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without ſkill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which ſignified exerciſe [36]. Military exerciſes were the important and unremitted object of their diſcipline. The recruits and young ſoldiers were conſtantly trained

[34] Tacitus calls the Roman Eagles, Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worſhip of the troops.

[35] See Gronovius de Pecunia vetere, l. iii. p. 120, &c. The emperor Domitian raiſed the annual ſtipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, ſomewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increaſed, according to the progreſs of wealth and military government. After twenty years ſervice, the veteran received three thouſand denarii (about one hundred pounds ſterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double thoſe of the legions.

[36] *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Linguâ Latinâ, l. iv. Cicero in Tuſculan. l. ii. 37. There is room for a very intereſting work, which ſhould lay open the connexion between the languages and manners of nations.

both

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both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuſe the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large ſheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their uſeful labours might not receive any interruption from the moſt tempeſtuous weather; and it was carefully obſerved, that the arms deſtined to this imitation of war, ſhould be of double the weight which was required in real action[37]. It is not the purpoſe of this work to enter into any minute deſcription of the Roman exerciſes. We ſhall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add ſtrength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The ſoldiers were diligently inſtructed to march, to run, to leap, to ſwim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every ſpecies of arms that was uſed either for offence or for defence, either in diſtant engagement or in a cloſer onſet; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the ſound of flutes, in the Pyrrhic or martial dance[38]. In the midſt of peace, the Roman troops familiariſed themſelves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient hiſtorian who had fought againſt them, that the effuſion of blood was the only circumſtance which diſtinguiſhed a field of battle from a field of exerciſe[39]. It was the policy of the ableſt generals, and even of the emperors themſelves, to encourage theſe military ſtudies by their preſence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condeſcended to inſtruct the unexperienced ſoldiers, to reward the diligent, and ſometimes to diſpute with them the prize of ſuperior ſtrength or dexterity[40]. Under the reigns of thoſe princes,

[37] Vegetius, l. ii. and the reſt of his firſt book.

[38] The Pyrrhic Dance is extremely well illuſtrated by M. le Beau, in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxxv. p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a ſeries of memoirs, has collected all the paſſages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

[39] Joſeph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii. c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for ſome very curious details of Roman diſcipline.

[40] Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

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the ſcience of tactics was cultivated with ſucceſs; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military inſtructions were reſpected as the moſt perfect model of Roman diſcipline.

The legions under the emperors.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the ſervice many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are deſcribed by Polybius [41], in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from thoſe which atchieved the victories of Cæſar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The conſtitution of the Imperial legion may be deſcribed in a few words [42]. The heavy-armed infantry, which compoſed its principal ſtrength [43], was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correſpondent number of tribunes and centurions.† The firſt cohort, which always claimed the poſt of honour and the cuſtody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five ſoldiers, the moſt approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts conſiſted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to ſix thouſand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their ſervice: an open helmet, with a lofty creſt; a breaſt-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and an half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and ſtrongly guarded with plates of braſs. Beſides a lighter ſpear, the legionary ſoldier graſped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whoſe utmoſt length was about ſix feet, and which was terminated by a maſſy triangular

† The compoſition of the Roman officers was very faulty. 1. It was late before a Tribune was fixed to each cohort. Six tribunes were choſen for the entire legion, which two of them commanded by turns (Polyb. l. vi. p. 526 Edit. Schweighæuſer) for the ſpace of two months. 2. Our long ſubordination from the Colonel to the Corporal was unknown. I cannot diſcern any intermediate ranks between the Tribune and the Centurion the Centurion, and the Manipularis or private legionary. 3. As the Tribunes were often without experience, the Centurions were often without education, mere ſoldiers of fortune who had riſen from the ranks (eo immitior quia toleraverat. Tacit. Annal. i. 20.). A body equal to eight or nine of our battalions might be commanded by half a dozen young gentlemen and fifty or ſixty old ſerjeants

Like the legions our great ſhips of war may ſeem ill-provided with officers: but in both caſes the deficiency is corrected by ſtrong principles of diſcipline and vigour.

Arms.

[41] See an admirable digreſſion on the Roman diſcipline, in the ſixth book of his hiſtory.

[42] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 4, &c. Conſiderable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he deſcribes it, cannot ſuit any other age of the Roman empire.

[43] Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 1. In the purer age of Cæſar and Cicero, the word *miles* was almoſt confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almoſt as excluſively to the men at arms, who fought on horſeback.

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triangular point of ſteel of eighteen inches [44]. This inſtrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-arms; ſince it was exhauſted by a ſingle diſcharge, at the diſtance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and ſkilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durſt venture within its reach, nor any ſhield or corſlet that could ſuſtain the impetuoſity of its weight. As ſoon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his ſword, and ruſhed forwards to cloſe with the enemy. His ſword was a ſhort well-tempered Spaniſh blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike ſuited to the purpoſe of ſtriking or of puſhing; but the ſoldier was always inſtructed to prefer the latter uſe of his weapon, as his own body remained leſs expoſed, whilſt he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adverſary [45]. The legion was uſually drawn up eight deep; and the regular diſtance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks [46]. A body of troops, habituated to preſerve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themſelves prepared to execute every diſpoſition which the circumſtances of war, or the ſkill of their leader, might ſuggeſt. The ſoldier poſſeſſed a free ſpace for his arms and motions, and ſufficient intervals were allowed, through which ſeaſonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhauſted combatants [47]. The tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians were formed on very different principles. The ſtrength of the phalanx depended on ſixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the cloſeſt array [48]. But it

[44] In the time of Polybius and Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus (l. v. c. 45.), the ſteel point of the *pilum* ſeems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius, it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have choſen a medium.

[45] For the legionary arms, ſee Lipſius de Militiâ Romanâ, l. iii. c. 2—7.

[46] See the beautiful compariſon of Virgil, Georgic. ii. v. 279.

[47] M. Guichardt, Memoires Militaires, tom. i. c. 4. and Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 293—311, has treated the ſubject like a ſcholar and an officer.

[48] See Arrian's Tactics. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather choſe to deſcribe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

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was ſoon diſcovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the ſtrength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion[49].

Cavalry.

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or ſquadrons; the firſt, as the companion of the firſt cohort, conſiſted of an hundred and thirty-two men; whilſt each of the other nine amounted only to ſixty-ſix. The entire eſtabliſhment formed a regiment, if we may uſe the modern expreſſion, of ſeven hundred and twenty-ſix horſe, naturally connected with its reſpective legion, but occaſionally ſeparated to act in the line, and to compoſe a part of the wings of the army[50]. The cavalry of the emperors was no longer compoſed, like that of the ancient republic, of the nobleſt youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military ſervice on horſeback, prepared themſelves for the offices of ſenator and conſul; and ſolicited, by deeds of valour, the future ſuffrages of their countrymen[51]. Since the alteration of manners and government, the moſt wealthy of the equeſtrian order were engaged in the adminiſtration of juſtice, and of the revenue[52]; and whenever they embraced the profeſſion of arms, they were immediately intruſted with a troop of horſe, or a cohort of foot[53]. Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the ſame provinces, and the ſame claſs of their ſubjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horſes were bred, for the moſt part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers deſpiſed the complete armour with which the cavalry of the

49 Polyb. l. xvii.

50 Veget. de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 6. His poſitive teſtimony, which might be ſupported by circumſtantial evidence, ought ſurely to ſilence thoſe critics who refuſe the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.

51 See Livy almoſt throughout, particularly xlii. 61.

52 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xxxiii. 2. The true ſenſe of that very curious paſſage was firſt diſcovered and illuſtrated by M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. ii. c. 2.

53 ~~As in the inſtance of Horace and Agricola.~~ This appears to have been a defect in the Roman diſcipline; which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy, by aſcertaining the legal age of a tribune.

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East was encumbered. *Their* more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances and of iron maces they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians [54].

Auxiliaries.

The safety and honour of the empire was principally intrusted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Many dependant princes and communities, dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the tenure of military service [55]. Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state [56]. All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves [57]. Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of præfects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this institution each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation,

[54] See Arrian's Tactics.

[55] Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

[56] Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxi.

[57] Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors, with the Italian allies of the republic.

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tion, with the advantages of its reſpective arms and diſcipline[58]. Nor was the legion deſtitute of what, in modern language, would be ſtyled a train of artillery. It conſiſted in ten military engines of the largeſt, and fifty-five of a ſmaller ſize; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, diſcharged ſtones and darts with irreſiſtible violence[59].

Artillery.

The camp of a Roman legion preſented the appearance of a fortified city[60]. As ſoon as the ſpace was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a ſquare of about ſeven hundred yards was ſufficient for the encampment of twenty thouſand Romans; though a ſimilar number of our own troops would expoſe to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midſt of the camp, the prætorium, or general's quarters, roſe above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries occupied their reſpective ſtations; the ſtreets were broad, and perfectly ſtraight, and a vacant ſpace of two hundred feet was left on all ſides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itſelf was uſually twelve feet high, armed with a line of ſtrong and intricate paliſades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries

Encampment.

[58] Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle againſt the Alani.

[59] The ſubject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. ii. p. 233—290). He prefers them in many reſpects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may obſerve, that the uſe of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as perſonal valour and military ſkill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was ſupplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.

[60] Vegetius finiſhes his ſecond book, and the deſcription of the legion, with the following emphatic words: "Univerſa quæ in "quoque belli genere neceſſaria eſſe cre- "duntur, ſecum legio debet ubique portare, "ut in quovis loco fixerit caſtra, armatam "faciat civitatem."

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themſelves; to whom the uſe of the ſpade and the pick-axe was no leſs familiar than that of the ſword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the preſent of nature; but ſuch patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and diſcipline[61].

March.

Whenever the trumpet gave the ſignal of departure, the camp was almoſt inſtantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confuſion. Beſides their arms, which the legionaries ſcarcely conſidered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the inſtruments of fortification, and the proviſion of many days[62]. Under this weight, which would oppreſs the delicacy of a modern ſoldier, they were trained by a regular ſtep to advance, in about ſix hours, near twenty miles[63]. On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aſide their baggage, and by eaſy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle[64]. The ſlingers and archers ſkirmiſhed in the front; the auxiliaries formed the firſt line, and were ſeconded or ſuſtained by the ſtrength of the legions: the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Number and diſpoſition of the legions.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extenſive conqueſts, and preſerved a military ſpirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppreſſed by luxury and deſpotiſm. If, in the conſideration of their armies, we paſs from their diſcipline to their numbers, we ſhall not find it eaſy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itſelf a body of ſix thou-

[61] For the Roman Caſtremetation, ſee Polybius, l. vi. with Lipſius de Militia Romana, Joſeph. de Bel. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21—25. iii. 9. and Memoires de Guichard, tom. i. c. 1.

[62] Cicero in Tuſculan. ii. 37.—Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5. Frontinus, iv. 1.

[63] Vegetius, i. 9. See Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.

[64] See thoſe evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 141—234.

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ſand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thouſand five hundred men. The peace eſtabliſhment of Hadrian and his ſucceſſors was compoſed of no leſs than thirty of theſe formidable brigades; and moſt probably formed a ſtanding force of three hundred and ſeventy-five thouſand men. Inſtead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans conſidered as the refuge of weakneſs or puſillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their ſtations, for the moſt part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to deſcribe the diſtribution of the troops. Three legions were ſufficient for Britain. The principal ſtrength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and conſiſted of ſixteen legions, in the following proportions: two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhætia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæſia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was entruſted to eight legions, ſix of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important ſcene of war, a ſingle legion maintained the domeſtic tranquillity of each of thoſe great provinces. Even Italy was not left deſtitute of a military force. Above twenty thouſand choſen ſoldiers, diſtinguiſhed by the titles of City Cohorts and Prætorian Guards, watched over the ſafety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almoſt every revolution that diſtracted the empire, the Prætorians will, very ſoon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but in their arms and inſtitutions, we cannot find any circumſtance which diſcriminated them from the legions, unleſs it were a more ſplendid appearance, and a leſs rigid diſcipline[65].

[65] Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5.) has given us a ſtate of the legions under Tiberius: and Dion Caſſius (l. lv. p. 794.) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between theſe two periods. See likewiſe Lipſius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4, 5.

The

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The navy maintained by the emperors might ſeem inadequate to their greatneſs; but it was fully ſufficient for every uſeful purpoſe of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterpriſing ſpirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marſeilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the moſt remote coaſts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained an object of terror rather than of curioſity[66]; the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the deſtruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preſerve the peaceful dominion of that ſea, and to protect the commerce of their ſubjects. With theſe moderate views, Auguſtus ſtationed two permanent fleets in the moſt convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, the other at Miſenum, in the bay of Naples. Experience ſeems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as ſoon as their gallies exceeded two, or at the moſt three ranks of oars, they were ſuited rather for vain pomp than for real ſervice. Auguſtus himſelf, in the victory of Actium, had ſeen the ſuperiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy caſtles of his rival[67]. Of theſe Liburnians he compoſed the two fleets of Ravenna and Miſenum, deſtined to command, the one the eaſtern, the other the weſtern diviſion of the Mediterranean; and to each of the ſquadrons he attached a body of ſeveral thouſand marines. Beſides theſe two ports, which may be conſidered as the principal ſeats of the Roman navy, a very conſiderable force was ſta-

[66] The Romans tried to diſguiſe, by the pretence of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

[67] Plutarch. in Marc. Anton. And yet, if we may credit Oroſius, theſe monſtrous caſtles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19.

tioned at Frejus, on the coaſt of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded by forty ſhips, and three thouſand ſoldiers. To all theſe we add the fleet which preſerved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of veſſels conſtantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to haraſs the country, or to intercept the paſſage of the barbarians [68]. If we review this general ſtate of the Imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the moſt liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire eſtabliſhment by ſea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thouſand men: a military power, which, however formidable it may ſeem, was equalled by a monarch of the laſt century, whoſe kingdom was confined within a ſingle province of the Roman empire [69].

Amount of the whole eſtabliſhment.

We have attempted to explain the ſpirit which moderated, and the ſtrength which ſupported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We ſhall now endeavour, with clearneſs and preciſion, to deſcribe the provinces once united under their ſway, but, at preſent, divided into ſo many independent and hoſtile ſtates.

View of the provinces of the Roman empire.

Spain, the weſtern extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preſerved the ſame natural limits; the Pyrenæan mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninſula, at preſent ſo unequally divided between two ſovereigns, was diſtributed by Auguſtus into three provinces, Luſitania, Bætica, and Tarraconenſis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Luſitanians; and the loſs ſuſtained by the former, on the ſide of the Eaſt, is compenſated by an acceſſion of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andaluſia correſpond with thoſe of

Spain.

[68] See Lipſius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The ſixteen laſt chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

[69] Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It muſt, however, be remembered, that France ſtill feels that extraordinary effort.

ancient

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ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain, Gallicia, and the Aſturias, Biſcay, and Navarre, Leon, and the two Caſtilles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and moſt conſiderable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was ſtyled the province of Tarragona[70]. Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the moſt powerful, as the Cantabrians and Aſturians proved the moſt obſtinate. Confident in the ſtrength of their mountains, they were the laſt who ſubmitted to the arms of Rome, and the firſt who threw off the yoke of the Arabs.

Gaul.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquiſitions of Alſace and Lorraine, we muſt add the dutchy of Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburgh, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Auguſtus gave laws to the conqueſts of his father, he introduced a diviſion of Gaul equally adapted to the progreſs of the legions, to the courſe of the rivers, and to the principal national diſtinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent ſtates[71]. The ſea-coaſt of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was ſtyled the

[70] See Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to ſuppoſe, that Arragon is derived from Tarraconenſis, and ſeveral moderns who have written in Latin, uſe thoſe words as ſynonymous. It is however certain, that the Arragon, a little ſtream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, firſt gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Geographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.

[71] One hundred and fifteen *cities* appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this apellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each ſtate. But Plutarch and Appian increaſe the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

Celtic

Celtic Gaul, and ſoon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæſar, the Germans, abuſing their ſuperiority of valour, had occupied a conſiderable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced ſo flattering a circumſtance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Baſil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany [72]. Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the ſix provinces of Gaul; the Narbonneſe, Aquitaine, the Celtic, or Lyonneſe, the Belgic, and the two Germanies.

Britain.

We have already had occaſion to mention the conqueſt of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this iſland. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dunbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain loſt her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the moſt conſiderable were the Belgæ in the Weſt, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk [73]. As far as we can either trace or credit the reſemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the ſame hardy race of ſavages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often diſputed the field, and often renewed the conteſt. After their ſubmiſſion they conſtituted the weſtern diviſion of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the ſources of the Rhine and Danube.

Italy.

Before the Roman conqueſt, the country which is now called Lombardy, was not conſidered as a part of Italy. It had been

[72] D'Anville. Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule.

[73] Whitaker's Hiſtory of Mancheſter, vol. i. c. 3.

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occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who ſettling themſelves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffuſed their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coaſt, which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn; but the territories of that ſtate, which lie to the eaſt of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians [74]. The middle part of the peninſula that now compoſes the dutchy of Tuſcany and the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, was the ancient ſeat of the Etruſcans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the firſt rudiments of civilized life [75]. The Tyber rolled at the foot of the ſeven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volſci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the firſt conſuls deſerved triumphs; their ſucceſſors adorned villas, and *their* poſterity have erected convents [76]. Capua and Campania poſſeſſed the immediate territory of Naples; the reſt of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marſi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the ſea-coaſts had been covered by the flouriſhing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Auguſtus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Iſtria was annexed to that ſeat of Roman ſovereignty [77].

The Danube and Illyrian frontier.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the courſe of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of thoſe mighty ſtreams, which riſes at the diſtance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the moſt part, to the ſouth-eaſt, collects the tribute of ſixty navigable rivers, and is, at length,

[74] The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xviii.

[75] See Maffei Verona illuſtrata, l. i.

[76] The firſt contraſt was obſerved by the ancients. See Florus, i. 11. The ſecond muſt ſtrike every modern traveller.

[77] Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. iii.) follows the diviſion of Italy, by Auguſtus.

through ſix mouths received into the Euxine, which appears ſcarcely equal to ſuch an acceſſion of waters [78]. The provinces of the Danube ſoon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier [79], and were eſteemed the moſt warlike of the empire; but they deſerve to be more particularly conſidered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mæſia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

Rhætia.

The province of Rhætia, which ſoon extinguiſhed the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the ſummit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its ſource, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greateſt part of the flat country is ſubject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augſburg is protected by the conſtitution of the German empire; the Griſons are ſafe in their mountains, and the country of Tirol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the houſe of Auſtria.

Noricum and Pannonia.

The wide extent of territory, which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save; Auſtria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary and Sclavonia, was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original ſtate of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they ſtill remain the patrimony of a ſingle family. They now contain the reſidence of a German prince, who ſtyles himſelf Emperor of the Romans, and form the center, as well as ſtrength, of the Auſtrian power. It may not be improper to obſerve, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern ſkirts of Auſtria, and a part of Hungary, between the Teyſs and the Danube, all the other domi-

[78] Tournefort, Voyages en Grèce et Aſie Mineure, lettre xviii.

[79] The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the ſea-coaſt of the Hadriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.

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nions of the Houſe of Auſtria were compriſed within the limits of the Roman empire.

Dalmatia.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The beſt part of the ſea-coaſt, which ſtill retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian ſtate, and the ſeat of the little republic of Raguſa. The inland parts have aſſumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Boſnia; the former obeys an Auſtrian governor, the latter a Turkiſh paſha; but the whole country is ſtill infeſted by tribes of barbarians, whoſe ſavage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Chriſtian and Mahometan power [80].

Mæſia and Dacia.

After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyſs and the Save, it acquired, at leaſt, among the Greeks, the name of Iſter [81]. It formerly divided Mæſia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already ſeen, was a conqueſt of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we inquire into the preſent ſtate of thoſe countries, we ſhall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeſwar and Tranſylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilſt the principalities of Moldavia and Walachia acknowledge the ſupremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mæſia, which, during the middle ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkiſh ſlavery.

Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is ſtill beſtowed by the Turks on the extenſive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preſerves the memory of their ancient ſtate under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace,

[80] A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us ſome account of thoſe very obſcure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the weſtern Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its ſovereign.

[81] The Save riſes near the confines of *Iſtria*, and was conſidered by the more early Greeks as the principal ſtream of the Danube.

from

from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope, to the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont, had aſſumed the form of a province. Notwithſtanding the change of maſters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Conſtantine on the banks of the Boſphorus, has ever ſince remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which, under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Aſia, derived more ſolid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and with its dependencies of Epirus and Theſſaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian ſea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can ſcarcely perſuade ourſelves, that ſo many immortal republics of ancient Greece were loſt in a ſingle province of the Roman empire, which, from the ſuperior influence of the Achæan league, was uſually denominated the province of Achaia.

Aſia Minor.

Such was the ſtate of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Aſia, without excepting the tranſient conqueſts of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkiſh power. But, inſtead of following the arbitrary diviſions of deſpotiſm and ignorance, it will be ſafer for us, as well as more agreeable, to obſerve the indelible characters of nature. The name of Aſia Minor is attributed with ſome propriety to the peninſula, which, confined between the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The moſt extenſive and flouriſhing diſtrict, weſtward of mount Taurus and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the excluſive title of Aſia. The juriſdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus poſſeſſed the northern ſide of the peninſula from Conſtantinople to Trebizond. On the oppoſite ſide, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains

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tains of Syria: the inland country, ſeparated from the Roman Aſia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may obſerve, that the northern ſhores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Aſia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the ſovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands, either tributary princes or Roman garriſons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circaſſia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of thoſe ſavage countries [82].

Syria, Phœnicia, and Paleſtine.

Under the ſucceſſors of Alexander, Syria was the ſeat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Aſia, till the ſucceſsful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became ſubject to the Romans, it formed the eaſtern frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmoſt latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the ſouth, the confines of Egypt, and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Paleſtine were ſometimes annexed to, and ſometimes ſeparated from, the juriſdiction of Syria. The former of theſe was a narrow and rocky coaſt; the latter was a territory ſcarcely ſuperior to Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phœnicia and Paleſtine will for ever live in the memory of mankind; ſince America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other [83]. A ſandy deſert alike deſtitute of wood and water ſkirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inſeparably connected with their inde-

[82] See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coaſts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

[83] The progreſs of religion is well known. The uſe of letters was introduced among the ſavages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Chriſt; and the Europeans carried them to America, about fifteen centuries after the Chriſtian æra. But in a period of three thouſand years, the Phœnician alphabet received conſiderable alterations, as it paſſed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

pendence,

pendence, and wherever, on ſome ſpots leſs barren than the reſt, they ventured to form any ſettled habitations, they ſoon became ſubjects to the Roman empire [84].

Egypt.

The geographers of antiquity have frequently heſitated to what portion of the globe they ſhould aſcribe Egypt [85]. By its ſituation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immenſe peninſula of Africa; but it is acceſſible only on the ſide of Aſia, whoſe revolutions, in almoſt every period of hiſtory, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman præfect was ſeated on the ſplendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron ſceptre of the Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkiſh paſha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either ſide, the extent of fertility by the meaſure of its inundations. Cyrene, ſituate towards the weſt, and along the ſea-coaſt, was firſt a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Africa, and is now loſt in the deſert of Barca.

Africa.

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coaſt of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet ſo cloſely is it preſſed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or ſandy deſert, that its breadth ſeldom exceeds fourſcore or an hundred miles. The eaſtern diviſion was conſidered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the moſt ſavage of mankind. Under the immediate juriſdiction of Carthage, it became the center of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and diſorderly ſtates of Tripoli and

[84] Dion Caſſius, lib. lxviii. p. 1131.

[85] Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Iſthmus of Suez as the boundary of Aſia and Africa. Dionyſius, Mela, Pliny, Salluſt, Hirtius and Solinus, have preferred for that purpoſe the weſtern branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or deſcent, which laſt would aſſign to Aſia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

Tunis.

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Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppreſſes the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Maſſiniſſa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Auguſtus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at leaſt, two thirds of the country acquieſced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæſarienſis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, was diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of Tingitana, is repreſented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the Ocean, ſo infamous at preſent for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almoſt of their geography. A city of their foundation may ſtill be diſcovered near Mequinez, the reſidence of the barbarian whom we condeſcend to ſtyle the Emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear, that his more ſouthern dominions, Morocco itſelf, and Segelmeſſa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The weſtern parts of Africa are interſected by the branches of mount Atlas, a name ſo idly celebrated by the fancy of poets[86]; but which is now diffuſed over the immenſe ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent[87].

The Mediterranean with its iſlands.

Having now finiſhed the circuit of the Roman empire, we may obſerve, that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow ſtrait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, ſo famous among the ancients, were two mountains which ſeemed to have been torn aſunder by ſome convulſion of the elements; and at the foot of

[86] The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of mount Atlas (ſee Shaw's Travels, p. 5.) are very unlike a ſolitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and ſeems to ſupport the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, riſes a league and a half above the ſurface of the ſea, and as it was frequently viſited by the Phœnicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Hiſtoire Naturelle, tom. i. p. 312. Hiſtoire des Voyages, tom. ii.

[87] M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297. unſupported by either fact or probability, has generouſly beſtowed the Canary Iſlands on the Roman empire.

the

More correctly, according to Mr Bouguer, 2500 Toises (Buffon Supplement Tom V p 804). The height of Mont Blanc is now fixed at 2426 Toises (Sauſsure Voyage dans les Alpes Tom i p 495): but the Lowest ground from whence it can be seen is itself greatly elevated above the level of the Sea. He who sails by the isle of Teneriff, contemplates the entire Side, from the foot to the summit.

the European mountain, the fortreſs of Gibraltar is now ſeated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coaſts, and its iſlands, were compriſed within the Roman dominion. Of the larger iſlands, the two Baleares, which derive their name of Majorca and Minorca from their reſpective ſize, are ſubject at preſent, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is eaſier to deplore the fate, than to deſcribe the actual condition of Corſica. Two Italian ſovereigns aſſume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and moſt of the ſmaller iſlands of Greece and Aſia, have been ſubdued by the Turkiſh arms; whilſt the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence.

General idea of the Roman empire.

This long enumeration of provinces, whoſe broken fragments have formed ſo many powerful kingdoms, might almoſt induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extenſive ſway, the irreſiſtible ſtrength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themſelves to deſpiſe, and ſometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually uſurped the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth[88]. But the temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern hiſtorian, require a more ſober and accurate language. He may impreſs a juſter image of the greatneſs of Rome, by obſerving that the empire was above two thouſand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended, in length, more than three thouſand miles from the Weſtern Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was ſituated in the fineſt part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-ſixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was ſuppoſed to contain above ſixteen hundred thouſand ſquare miles, for the moſt part of fertile and well cultivated land[89].

[88] Bergier, Hiſt. des Grands Chemins, l. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4. a very uſeful collection.

[89] See Templeman's Survey of the Globe: but I diſtruſt both the doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAP. II.

Of the Union and internal Proſperity of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines.

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Principles of government.

IT is not alone by the rapidity, or extent of conqueſt, that we ſhould eſtimate the greatneſs of Rome. The ſovereign of the Ruſſian deſerts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the ſeventh ſummer after his paſſage of the Helleſpont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphaſis[1]. Within leſs than a century, the irreſiſtible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, ſpread their cruel devaſtations and tranſient empire, from the ſea of China, to the confines of Egypt and Germany[2]. But the firm edifice of Roman power was raiſed and preſerved by the wiſdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws, and adorned by arts. They might occaſionally ſuffer from the partial abuſe of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wiſe, ſimple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their anceſtors, whilſt in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by juſt degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

Univerſal ſpirit of toleration.

I. The policy of the emperors and the ſenate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily ſeconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the ſuperſtitious, part of their ſubjects. The various modes of worſhip, which prevailed in the

[1] They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Dehli. The conqueſts of Alexander in Hindoſtan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great ſtreams of the Indus.

[2] See M. de Guignes Hiſtoire des Huns, l. xv, xvi, and xvii.

Roman

Roman world, were all conſidered by the people, as equally true; by the philoſopher, as equally falſe; and by the magiſtrate, as equally uſeful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

Of the people.

The ſuperſtition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any ſpeculative ſyſtem. The devout polytheiſt, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth[3]. Fear, gratitude, and curioſity, a dream or an omen, a ſingular diſorder, or a diſtant journey, perpetually diſpoſed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the liſt of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not diſcordant materials. As ſoon as it was allowed that ſages and heroes, who had lived, or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a ſtate of power and immortality, it was univerſally confeſſed, that they deſerved, if not the adoration, at leaſt the reverence, of all mankind. The deities of a thouſand groves and a thouſand ſtreams poſſeſſed, in peace, their local and reſpective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who preſented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The viſible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the ſame throughout the univerſe. The inviſible governors of the moral world were inevitably caſt in a ſimilar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine repreſentative; every art

[3] There is not any writer who deſcribes in ſo lively a manner as Herodotus, the true genius of Polytheiſm. The beſt commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural Hiſtory of Religion; and the beſt contraſt in Boſſuet's Univerſal Hiſtory. Some obſcure traces of an intolerant ſpirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (ſee Juvenal, Sat. xv.); and the Chriſtians as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception: ſo important indeed, that the diſcuſſion will require a diſtinct chapter of this work.

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and profeſſion its patron, whoſe attributes, in the moſt diſtant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of ſuch oppoſite tempers and intereſt required, in every ſyſtem, the moderating hand of a ſupreme magiſtrate, who, by the progreſs of knowledge and flattery, was gradually inveſted with the ſublime perfections of an Eternal Parent, and an Omnipotent Monarch[4]. Such was the mild ſpirit of antiquity, that the nations were leſs attentive to the difference, than to the reſemblance, of their religious worſhip. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their reſpective altars, eaſily perſuaded themſelves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the ſame deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almoſt a regular form, to the polytheiſm of the ancient world[5].

Of philoſophers.

The philoſophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature, as a very curious and important ſpeculation; and in the profound inquiry, they diſplayed the ſtrength and weakneſs of the human underſtanding[6]. Of the four moſt celebrated ſchools, the Stoics and the Platoniſts endeavoured to reconcile the jarring intereſts of reaſon and piety. They have left us the moſt ſublime proofs of the exiſtence and perfections of the firſt cauſe; but, as it was impoſſible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philoſophy was not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from the work; whilſt, on the contrary, the ſpiritual God of Plato

[4] The rights, powers, and pretenſions of the ſovereign of Olympus, are very clearly deſcribed in the xvth book of the Iliad: in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer.

[5] See for inſtance, Cæſar de Bell. Gall. vi. 17. Within a century or two the Gauls themſelves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

[6] The admirable work of Cicero de Naturâ Deorum, is the beſt clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyſs. He repreſents with candour, and confutes with ſubtlety, the opinions of the philoſophers.

and

and his diſciples, reſembled an idea, rather than a ſubſtance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a leſs religious caſt; but whilſt the modeſt ſcience of the former induced them to doubt, the poſitive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The ſpirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation, and ſupported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philoſophy into a variety of contending ſects; but the ingenuous youth, who, from every part, reſorted to Athens, and the other ſeats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike inſtructed in every ſchool to reject and to deſpiſe the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it poſſible, that a philoſopher ſhould accept, as divine truths, the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or, that he ſhould adore, as gods, thoſe imperfect beings whom he muſt have deſpiſed, as men! Againſt ſuch unworthy adverſaries, Cicero condeſcended to employ the arms of reaſon and eloquence; but the ſatire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well aſſured, that a writer, converſant with the world, would never have ventured to expoſe the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of ſecret contempt among the poliſhed and enlightened orders of ſociety[7].

Notwithſtanding the faſhionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the intereſt of the prieſts and the credulity of the people were ſufficiently reſpected. In their writings and converſation, the philoſophers of antiquity aſſerted the independent dignity of reaſon; but they reſigned their actions to the commands of law and of cuſtom. Viewing, with a ſmile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practiſed the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods; and ſometimes condeſcending to act a part on the theatre of

[7] I do not pretend to aſſert, that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of ſuperſtition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c. had loſt their efficacy.

ſuperſtition,

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ſuperſtition, they concealed the ſentiments of an Atheiſt under the ſacerdotal robes. Reaſoners of ſuch a temper were ſcarcely inclined to wrangle about their reſpective modes of faith, or of worſhip. It was indifferent to them what ſhape the folly of the multitude might chuſe to aſſume; and they approached, with the ſame inward contempt, and the ſame external reverence, the altars of the Lybian, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter[8].

Of the magiſtrate.

It is not eaſy to conceive from what motives a ſpirit of perſecution could introduce itſelf into the Roman councils. The magiſtrates could not be actuated by a blind, though honeſt bigotry, ſince the magiſtrates were themſelves philoſophers; and the ſchools of Athens had given laws to the ſenate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and eccleſiaſtical powers were united in the ſame hands. The pontiffs were choſen among the moſt illuſtrious of the ſenators; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was conſtantly exerciſed by the emperors themſelves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public feſtivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination, as a convenient inſtrument of policy; and they reſpected as the firmeſt bond of ſociety, the uſeful perſuaſion, that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is moſt aſſuredly puniſhed by the avenging gods[9]. But whilſt they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced, that the various modes of worſhip contributed alike to the ſame ſalutary purpoſes; and that, in every country, the form of ſuperſtition, which had received the ſanction of time and experience, was the beſt adapted to the climate, and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taſte very

In the provinces;

[8] Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country, and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was aſſiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. x. 10.

[9] Polybius, l. vi. c. 53, 54. Juvenal, Sat. xiii. laments, that in his time this apprehenſion had loſt much of its effect.

frequently

frequently deſpoiled the vanquiſhed nations of the elegant ſtatues of their gods, and the rich ornaments of their temples[10]: but, in the exerciſe of the religion which they derived from their anceſtors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul ſeems, and indeed only ſeems, an exception to this univerſal toleration. Under the ſpecious pretext of aboliſhing human ſacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius ſuppreſſed the dangerous power of the Druids[11]: but the prieſts themſelves, their gods and their altars, ſubſiſted in peaceful obſcurity till the final deſtruction of Paganiſm[12].

at Rome.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was inceſſantly filled with ſubjects and ſtrangers from every part of the world[13], who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite ſuperſtitions of their native country[14]. Every city in the empire was juſtified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman ſenate, uſing the common privilege, ſometimes interpoſed, to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian ſuperſtition, of all the moſt contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Iſis demoliſhed, and their worſhippers baniſhed from Rome and Italy[15]. But the zeal of fanaticiſm prevailed over the

[10] See the fate of Syracuſe, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c. the conduct of Verres, in Cicero (Actio ii. Orat. 4.), and the uſual practice of governors, in the viiith Satire of Juvenal.

[11] Sueton. in Claud.—Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xxx. 1.

[12] Pelloutier Hiſtoire des Celtes, tom. vi. p. 230–252.

[13] Seneca Conſolat. ad Helviam, p. 74. Edit. Lipſ.

[14] Dionyſius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. ii.

[15] In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Iſis and Serapis was demoliſhed by the order of the ſenate (Dion Caſſius, l. xl. p. 252.), and even by the hands of the conſul (Valerius Maximus, 1. 3.). After the death of Cæſar, it was reſtored at the public expence (Dion, l. xlvii. p. 501.). When Auguſtus was in Egypt, he revered the majeſty of Serapis (Dion, l. li. p. 647.); but in the Pomærium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worſhip of the Egyptian gods (Dion, l. liii. p. 679. l. liv. p. 735.). They remained, however, very faſhionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. i.) and that of his ſucceſſor, till the juſtice of Tiberius was provoked to ſome acts of ſeverity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii. 85. Joſeph. Antiquit. l. xviii. c. 3.)

cold

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cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proſelytes multiplied, the temples were reſtored with increaſing ſplendor, and Iſis and Serapis at length aſſumed their place among the Roman deities [16]. Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the pureſt ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æſculapius had been invited by ſolemn embaſſies [17]; and it was cuſtomary to tempt the protectors of beſieged cities, by the promiſe of more diſtinguiſhed honours than they poſſeſſed in their native country [18]. Rome gradually became the common temple of her ſubjects; and the freedom of the city was beſtowed on all the gods of mankind [19].

Freedom of Rome.

II. The narrow policy of preſerving, without any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and haſtened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aſpiring genius of Rome ſacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own whereſoever they were found, among ſlaves or ſtrangers, enemies or barbarians [20]. During the moſt flouriſhing æra of the Athenian commonwealth, the number of citizens gradually decreaſed from about thirty [21] to twenty-one thouſand [22]. If, on the contrary, we ſtudy the growth of the Roman republic, we may diſcover, that, notwithſtanding the inceſſant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the firſt cenſus of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thouſand, were multiplied, before the

[16] Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6. p. 74. Edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their eſtabliſhment to the devotion of the Flavian family.

[17] See Livy, l. xi. and xxix.

[18] Macrob. Saturnalia, l. iii. c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation.

[19] Minutius Fælix in Octavio, p. 54. Arnobius, l. vi. p. 115.

[20] Tacit. Annal. xi. 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim, is a complete hiſtory of the progreſſive admiſſion of Latium, Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome.

[21] Herodotus, v. 97. It ſhould ſeem, however, that he followed a large and popular eſtimation.

[22] Athenæus Deipnoſophiſt. l. vi. p. 272, Edit. Caſaubon. Meurſius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 4.

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commencement of the ſocial war, to the number of four hundred and ſixty-three thouſand men, able to bear arms in the ſervice of their country[23]. When the allies of Rome claimed an equal ſhare of honours and privileges, the ſenate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious conceſſion. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the ſevere penalty of their raſhneſs; but the reſt of the Italian ſtates, as they ſucceſſively returned to their duty, were admitted into the boſom of the republic[24], and ſoon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government, the citizens exerciſe the powers of ſovereignty; and thoſe powers will be firſt abuſed, and afterwards loſt, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular aſſemblies had been ſuppreſſed by the adminiſtration of the emperors, the conquerors were diſtinguiſhed from the vanquiſhed nations, only as the firſt and moſt honourable order of ſubjects; and their increaſe, however rapid, was no longer expoſed to the ſame dangers. Yet the wiſeſt princes, who adopted the maxims of Auguſtus, guarded with the ſtricteſt care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffuſed the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality[25].

Till the privileges of Romans had been progreſſively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important diſtinction was preſerved between Italy and the provinces. The former was eſteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm baſis of the conſtitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at leaſt the reſidence, of the emperors and the ſenate[26]. The eſtates of the Italians were exempt Italy.

[23] See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each Luſtrum in M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. iv. c. 4.

[24] Appian. de Bell. civil. l. i. Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 15, 16, 17.

[25] Mæcenas had adviſed him to declare by one edict, all his ſubjects, citizens. But we may juſtly ſuſpect that the Hiſtorian Dion was the author of a counſel, ſo much adapted to the practice of his own age, and ſo little to that of Auguſtus.

[26] The ſenators were obliged to have one-third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one-fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had ſunk nearer to the level of the provinces.

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from taxes, their perſons from the arbitrary juriſdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, were intruſted, under the immediate eye of the ſupreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial diſtinctions were obliterated, and they inſenſibly coaleſced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil inſtitutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and ſervices of her adopted ſons. Had ſhe always confined the diſtinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of ſome of its nobleſt ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he ſhould call himſelf an Apulian or a Lucanian: it was in Padua that an hiſtorian was found worthy to record the majeſtic ſeries of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tuſculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deſerved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be ſtyled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after ſaving his country from the deſigns of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence[27].

The provinces.

The provinces of the empire (as they have been deſcribed in the preceding chapter) were deſtitute of any public force, or conſtitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece[28], and in Gaul[29], it was

[27] The firſt part of the Verona Illuſtrata of the Marquis Maffei, gives the cleareſt and moſt comprehenſive view of the ſtate of Italy under the Cæſars.

[28] See Pauſanias, l. vii. The Romans condeſcended to reſtore the names of thoſe aſſemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

[29] They are frequently mentioned by Cæſar. The Abbé Dubos attempts, with very little ſucceſs, to prove that the aſſemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Hiſtoire de l'Etabliſſement de la Monarchie Françoiſe, l. i. c. 4.

the

the firſt care of the ſenate to diſſolve thoſe dangerous confederacies which taught mankind, that, as the Roman arms prevailed by diviſion, they might be reſiſted by union. Thoſe princes, whom the oſtentation of gratitude or generoſity permitted for a while to hold a precarious ſceptre, were diſmiſſed from their thrones, as ſoon as they had performed their appointed taſk of faſhioning to the yoke the vanquiſhed nations. The free ſtates and cities which had embraced the cauſe of Rome, were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and inſenſibly ſunk into real ſervitude. The public authority was every where exerciſed by the miniſters of the ſenate and of the emperors, and that authority was abſolute, and without control. But the ſame ſalutary maxims of government, which had ſecured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the moſt diſtant conqueſts. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the moſt faithful and deſerving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

Colonies and municipal towns.

"Whereſoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very juſt obſervation of Seneca[30], confirmed by hiſtory and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleaſure or by intereſt, haſtened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that, about forty years after the reduction of Aſia, eighty thouſand Romans were maſſacred in one day, by the cruel orders of Mithridates[31]. Theſe voluntary exiles were engaged, for the moſt part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of ſoldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their ſervice in land or in money, uſually ſettled with their families in the country, where they had honourably ſpent

[30] Seneca in Conſolat. ad Helviam, c. 6.

[31] Memnon apud Photium, c. 33. Valer. Maxim. ix. 2. Plutarch and Dion Caſſius ſwell the maſſacre to 150,000 citizens; but I ſhould eſteem the ſmaller number to be more than ſufficient.

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their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the weſtern parts, the moſt fertile diſtricts, and the moſt convenient ſituations, were reſerved for the eſtabliſhment of colonies; ſome of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect repreſentation of their great parent; and they were ſoon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendſhip and alliance, they effectually diffuſed a reverence for the Roman name, and a deſire, which was ſeldom diſappointed, of ſharing, in due time, its honours and advantages[32]. The municipal cities inſenſibly equalled the rank and ſplendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian, it was diſputed which was the preferable condition, of thoſe ſocieties which had iſſued from, or thoſe which had been received into, the boſom of Rome[33]. The right of Latium, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted, a more partial favour. The magiſtrates only, at the expiration of their office, aſſumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as thoſe offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families[34]. Thoſe of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions[35]; thoſe who exerciſed any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public ſervice, or diſplayed any perſonal talents, were rewarded with a preſent, whoſe value was continually diminiſhed by the increaſing liberality of the emperors. Yet even, in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been

[32] Twenty-five colonies were ſettled in Spain (ſee Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 3, 4. iv. 35.): and nine in Britain, of which London, Colcheſter, Lincoln, Cheſter, Glouceſter, and Bath, ſtill remain conſiderable cities (ſee Richard of Cirenceſter, p. 36, and Whitaker's Hiſtory of Manchеſter, l. i. c. 3.).

[33] Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, xvi. 13. The emperor Hadrian expreſſed his ſurpriſe, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which already enjoyed the rights of *Municipia*, ſhould ſolicit the title of *colonies*. Their example, however, became faſhionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Uſu Numiſmatum, Diſſertat. xiii.

[34] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8. p. 62.

[35] Ariſtid. in Romæ Encomio, tom. i. p. 218, Edit. Jebb.

beſtowed

beſtowed on the greater number of their ſubjects, it was ſtill accompanied with very ſolid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the intereſting articles of marriage, teſtaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to thoſe whoſe pretenſions were ſeconded by favour or merit. The grandſons of the Gauls, who had beſieged Julius Cæſar in Aleſia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the ſenate of Rome[36]. Their ambition, inſtead of diſturbing the tranquillity of the ſtate, was intimately connected with its ſafety and greatneſs.

Diviſion of the Latin and the Greek provinces.

So ſenſible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their moſt ſerious care to extend, with the progreſs of their arms, the uſe of the Latin tongue[37]. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruſcan, and the Venetian, ſunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the eaſt was leſs docile than the weſt, to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a diſtinction of colours, which, though it was in ſome degree concealed during the meridian ſplendor of proſperity, became gradually more viſible, as the ſhades of night deſcended upon the Roman world. The weſtern countries were civilized by the ſame hands which ſubdued them. As ſoon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impreſſions of knowledge and politeneſs. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with ſome inevitable mixture of corruption, was ſo univerſally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia[38], that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preſerved

[36] Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hiſt. iv. 74.

[37] See Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5. Auguſtin. de Civitate Dei, xix. 7. Lipſius de pronunciatione Linguæ Latinæ, c. 3.

[38] Apuleius and Auguſtin will anſwer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus, for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inſcriptions.

only

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only in the mountains, or among the peaſants[39]. Education and ſtudy inſenſibly inſpired the natives of thoſe countries with the ſentiments of Romans; and Italy gave faſhions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They ſolicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the ſtate; ſupported the national dignity in letters[40] and in arms; and, at length, in the perſon of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have diſowned for their countryman. The ſituation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long ſince civilized and corrupted. They had too much taſte to relinquiſh their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign inſtitutions. Still preſerving the prejudices, after they had loſt the virtues, of their anceſtors, they affected to deſpiſe the unpoliſhed manners of the Roman conquerors, whilſt they were compelled to reſpect their ſuperior wiſdom and power[41]. Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and ſentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progreſs of colonies and conqueſt, had been diffuſed from the Hadriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Aſia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a ſilent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts thoſe princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the Eaſt, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble diſtance, by the higher ranks of their ſubjects. Such was the general diviſion of the Roman empire

[39] The Celtic was preſerved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may obſerve that Apuleius reproaches an African youth, who lived among the populace, with the uſe of the Punic; whilſt he had almoſt forgot Greek, and neither could nor would ſpeak Latin (Apolog. p. 596.). The greater part of St. Auſtin's congregations were ſtrangers to the Punic.

[40] Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian.

[41] There is not, I believe, from Dionyſius to Libanius, a ſingle Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They ſeem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers.

into

into the Latin and Greek languages. To theſe we may add a third diſtinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and eſpecially in Egypt. The uſe of their ancient dialects, by ſecluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of thoſe barbarians[42]. The ſlothful effeminacy of the former, expoſed them to the contempt; the ſullen ferociouſneſs of the latter, excited the averſion of the conquerors[43]. Thoſe nations had ſubmitted to the Roman power, but they ſeldom deſired or deſerved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapſed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the ſenate of Rome[44].

General uſe of both languages.

It is a juſt though trite obſervation, that victorious Rome was herſelf ſubdued by the arts of Greece. Thoſe immortal writers who ſtill command the admiration of modern Europe, ſoon became the favourite object of ſtudy and imitation in Italy and the weſtern provinces. But the elegant amuſements of the Romans were not ſuffered to interfere with their ſound maxims of policy. Whilſt they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they aſſerted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the excluſive uſe of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the adminiſtration of civil as well as military government[45]. The two languages exerciſed at the ſame time their ſeparate juriſdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of ſcience; the latter, as the legal dialect of public tranſactions. Thoſe who united letters with buſineſs, were equally converſant with both; and it was almoſt impoſſible, in any province, to find a Roman ſub-

[42] The curious reader may ſee in Dupin (Bibliotheque Eccleſiaſtique, tom. xix. p. 1. c. 8.) how much the uſe of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was ſtill preſerved.

[43] See Juvenal, Sat. iii. and xv. Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.

[44] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvii. p. 1275. The firſt inſtance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.

[45] See Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 2. n. 2. The emperor Claudius disfranchiſed an eminent Grecian for not underſtanding Latin. He was probably in ſome public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16.

ject,

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ject, of a liberal education, who was at once a ſtranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

Slaves.

It was by ſuch inſtitutions that the nations of the empire inſenſibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there ſtill remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without ſharing the benefits, of ſociety. In the free ſtates of antiquity, the domeſtic ſlaves were expoſed to the wanton rigour of deſpotiſm. The perfect ſettlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The ſlaves conſiſted, for the moſt part, of barbarian captives, taken in thouſands by the chance of war, purchaſed at a vile price [46], accuſtomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Againſt ſuch internal enemies, whoſe deſperate inſurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of deſtruction [47], the moſt ſevere regulations [48], and the moſt cruel treatment, ſeemed almoſt juſtified by the great law of ſelf-preſervation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were united under the laws of one ſovereign, the ſource of foreign ſupplies flowed with much leſs abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country eſtates, they encouraged the marriage of their ſlaves. The ſentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the poſſeſſion of a dependent ſpecies of property, contributed to alleviate the hardſhips of ſervitude [49]. The exiſtence of a ſlave became an object of greater value, and though his

Their treatment.

[46] In the camp of Lucullus, an ox ſold for a drachma, and a ſlave for four drachmæ, or about three ſhillings. Plutarch. in Lucull. p. 580.

[47] Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hiſt. l. xxxiv. and xxxvi. Florus, iii. 19, 20.

[48] See a remarkable inſtance of ſeverity in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3.

[49] See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inſcriptions addreſſed by ſlaves to their wives, children, fellow-ſervants, maſters, &c. They are all moſt probably of the Imperial age.

happineſs

happineſs ſtill depended on the temper and circumſtances of the maſter, the humanity of the latter, inſtead of being reſtrained by fear, was encouraged by the ſenſe of his own intereſt. The progreſs of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the moſt abject part of mankind. The juriſdiction of life and death over the ſlaves, a power long exerciſed and often abuſed, was taken out of private hands, and reſerved to the magiſtrates alone. The ſubterraneous priſons were aboliſhed; and, upon a juſt complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured ſlave obtained either his deliverance, or a leſs cruel maſter [50].

Enfranchiſement.

Hope, the beſt comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman ſlave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himſelf either uſeful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the ineſtimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the maſter was ſo frequently prompted by the meaner ſuggeſtions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more neceſſary to reſtrain than to encourage a profuſe and undiſtinguiſhing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuſe [51]. It was a maxim of ancient juriſprudence, that a ſlave had not any country of his own, he acquired with his liberty an admiſſion into the political ſociety of which his patron was a member. The conſequences of this maxim would have proſtituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiſcuous multitude. Some ſeaſonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable diſtinction was confined to ſuch ſlaves only, as for juſt cauſes, and

[50] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, and a Diſſertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inſcriptions, upon the Roman ſlaves.

[51] See another Diſſertation of M. de Burigny in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.

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with the approbation of the magiſtrate, ſhould receive a ſolemn and legal manumiſſion. Even theſe choſen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorouſly excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their ſons, *they* likewiſe were eſteemed unworthy of a ſeat in the ſenate; nor were the traces of a ſervile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation [52]. Without deſtroying the diſtinction of ranks, a diſtant proſpect of freedom and honours was preſented, even to thoſe whom pride and prejudice almoſt diſdained to number among the human ſpecies.

Numbers.

It was once propoſed to diſcriminate the ſlaves by a peculiar habit; but it was juſtly apprehended that there might be ſome danger in acquainting them with their own numbers [53]. Without interpreting, in their utmoſt ſtrictneſs, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads [54]; we may venture to pronounce, that the proportion of ſlaves, who were valued as property, was more conſiderable than that of ſervants, who can be computed only as an expence [55]. The youths of a promiſing genius were inſtructed in the arts and ſciences, and their price was aſcertained by the degree of their ſkill and talents [56]. Almoſt every profeſſion, either liberal [57] or mechanical, might be found in the houſehold of an opulent ſenator. The miniſters of pomp and ſenſuality were multiplied beyond the con-

[52] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16. p. 124, &c.

[53] Seneca de Clementiâ, l. i. c. 24. The original is much ſtronger, "Quantum periculum immineret ſi ſervi noſtri numerare nos cœpiſſent."

[54] See Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii.) and Athenæus (Deipnoſophiſt. l. vi. p. 272.) The latter boldly aſſerts, that he knew very many (παμπολλοι) Romans who poſſeſſed, not for uſe, but oſtentation, ten and even twenty thouſand ſlaves.

[55] In Paris there are not more than 43,700 domeſtics of every ſort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Meſſange Recherches ſur la Population, p. 186.

[56] A learned ſlave ſold for many hundred pounds ſterling; Atticus always bred and taught them himſelf. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13.

[57] Many of the Roman phyſicians were ſlaves. See Dr. Middleton's Diſſertation and Defence.

ception

ception of modern luxury[58]. It was more for the intereſt of the merchant or manufacturer to purchaſe, than to hire his workmen; and in the country, ſlaves were employed as the cheapeſt and moſt laborious inſtruments of agriculture. To confirm the general obſervation, and to diſplay the multitude of ſlaves, we might allege a variety of particular inſtances. It was diſcovered, on a very melancholy occaſion, that four hundred ſlaves were maintained in a ſingle palace of Rome[59]. The ſame number of four hundred belonged to an eſtate which an African widow, of a very private condition, reſigned to her ſon, whilſt ſhe reſerved for herſelf a much larger ſhare of her property[60]. A freedman, under the reign of Auguſtus, though his fortune had ſuffered great loſſes in the civil wars, left behind him three thouſand ſix hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thouſand head of ſmaller cattle, and, what was almoſt included in the deſcription of cattle, four thouſand one hundred and ſixteen ſlaves[61].

Populouſneſs of the Roman empire.

The number of ſubjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of ſlaves, cannot now be fixed with ſuch a degree of accuracy, as the importance of the object would deſerve. We are informed, that when the emperor Claudius exerciſed the office of cenſor, he took an account of ſix millions nine hundred and forty-five thouſand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, muſt have amounted to about twenty millions of ſouls. Ths multitude of ſubjects of an inferior rank, was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumſtance which could influence the balance, it ſeems probable, that there exiſted, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either ſex, and of every

[58] Their ranks and offices are very copiouſly enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.

[59] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They all were executed for not preventing their maſter's murder.

[60] Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. Edit. Delphin.

[61] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.

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age; and that the ſlaves were at leaſt equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would riſe to about one hundred and twenty millions of perſons: a degree of population which poſſibly exceeds that of modern Europe [62], and forms the moſt numerous ſociety that has ever been united under the ſame ſyſtem of government.

Obedience and union.

Domeſtic peace and union were the natural conſequences of the moderate and comprehenſive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Aſia, we ſhall behold deſpotiſm in the centre, and weakneſs in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the adminiſtration of juſtice, enforced by the preſence of an army; hoſtile barbarians eſtabliſhed in the heart of the country, hereditary ſatraps uſurping the dominion of the provinces, and ſubjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquiſhed nations, blended into one great people, reſigned the hope, nay even the wiſh, of reſuming their independence, and ſcarcely conſidered their own exiſtence as diſtinct from the exiſtence of Rome. The eſtabliſhed authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exerciſed with the ſame facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on thoſe of the Tyber. The legions were deſtined to ſerve againſt the public enemy, and the civil magiſtrate ſeldom required the aid of a military force [63]. In this ſtate of general ſecurity, the leiſure as well as opulence both of the prince and people, were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

[62] Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its iſlands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Ruſſia, ſix in Poland, ſix in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and ſeven millions. See Voltaire, de Hiſtoire Generale.

[63] Joſeph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii. c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the hiſtorian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

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Roman monuments.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture conſtructed by the Romans, how many have eſcaped the notice of hiſtory, how few have reſiſted the ravages of time and barbariſm! And yet even the majeſtic ruins that are ſtill ſcattered over Italy and the provinces, would be ſufficient to prove, that thoſe countries were once the ſeat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatneſs alone, or their beauty, might deſerve our attention; but they are rendered more intereſting, by two important circumſtances, which connect the agreeable hiſtory of the arts, with the more uſeful hiſtory of human manners. Many of thoſe works were erected at private expence, and almoſt all were intended for public benefit.

Many of them erected at private expence.

It is natural to ſuppoſe that the greateſt number, as well as the moſt conſiderable of the Roman edifices, were raiſed by the emperors, who poſſeſſed ſo unbounded a command both of men and money. Auguſtus was accuſtomed to boaſt that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble [64]. The ſtrict œconomy of Veſpaſian was the ſource of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the ſtamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire, were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inſpection. He was himſelf an artiſt; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happineſs of the people. But if the emperors were the firſt, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was univerſally imitated by their principal ſubjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had ſpirit to conceive, and wealth to ac-

[64] Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 28. Auguſtus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and baſilica of Caius and Lucius, the porticoes of Livia and Octavia, and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the ſovereign was imitated by his miniſters and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.

compliſh,

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compliſh, the nobleſt undertakings. Scarcely had the proud ſtructure of the Coliſeum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices of a ſmaller ſcale indeed, but of the ſame deſign and materials, were erected for the uſe, and at the expence, of the cities of Capua and Verona [65]. The inſcription of the ſtupendous bridge of Alcantara, atteſts that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Luſitanian communities. When Pliny was intruſted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richeſt or moſt conſiderable of the empire, he found the cities within his juriſdiction ſtriving with each other in every uſeful and ornamental work, that might deſerve the curioſity of ſtrangers, or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the Proconſul to ſupply their deficiencies, to direct their taſte, and ſometimes to moderate their emulation [66]. The opulent ſenators of Rome and the provinces eſteemed it an honour, and almoſt an obligation, to adorn the ſplendour of their age and country; and the influence of faſhion very frequently ſupplied the want of taſte or generoſity. Among a crowd of theſe private benefactors, we may ſelect Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greateſt kings.

Example of Herodes Atticus.

The family of Herod, at leaſt after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally deſcended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theſeus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the poſterity of ſo many gods and heroes was fallen into the moſt abject ſtate. His grandfather had ſuffered by the hands of juſtice, and Julius Atticus, his father,

[65] See Maffei, Verona illuſtrata, l. iv. p. 68.

[66] See the xth book of Pliny's Epiſtles. He mentions the following works, carried on at the expence of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfiniſhed by a king; at Nice, a Gymnaſium, and a theatre which had already coſt near ninety thouſand pounds; baths at Pruſa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of ſixteen miles in length for the uſe of Sinope.

muſt have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not diſcovered an immenſe treaſure buried under an old houſe, the laſt remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have aſſerted his claim, and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confeſſion, the officiouſneſs of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refuſed to accept any part of it, and commanded him to uſe, without ſcruple, the preſent of fortune. The cautious Athenian ſtill inſiſted, that the treaſure was too conſiderable for a ſubject, and that he knew not how to *uſe it*. *Abuſe it*, *then*, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peeviſhneſs; for it is your own[67]. Many will be of opinion, that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's laſt inſtructions; ſince he expended the greateſt part of his fortune, which was much increaſed by an advantageous marriage, in the ſervice of the Public. He had obtained for his ſon Herod, the prefecture of the free cities of Aſia; and the young magiſtrate, obſerving that the town of Troas was indifferently ſupplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian, three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hundred thouſand pounds) for the conſtruction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the eſtimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus ſilenced their complaints, by requeſting that he might be permitted to take upon himſelf the whole additional expence[68].

His reputation.

The ableſt preceptors of Greece and Aſia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil ſoon became a celebrated orator according to the uſeleſs rhetoric of that age, which, confining itſelf to the ſchools, diſdained to viſit either the Forum or the Senate. He was honoured with the con-

[67] Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treaſure-trove between the right of property and that of diſcovery. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 9.

[68] Philoſtrat. in Vit. Sophiſt. l. ii. p. 548.

ſulſhip

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ſulſhip at Rome; but the greateſt part of his life was ſpent in a philoſophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas; perpetually ſurrounded by ſophiſts, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the ſuperiority of a rich and generous rival [69]. The monuments of his genius have periſhed; ſome conſiderable ruins ſtill preſerve the fame of his taſte and munificence: modern travellers have meaſured the remains of the ſtadium which he conſtructed at Athens. It was ſix hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finiſhed in four years, whilſt Herod was preſident of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla, he dedicated a theatre, ſcarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiouſly carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, deſigned by Pericles for muſical performances, and the rehearſal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over Barbaric greatneſs; as the timbers employed in the conſtruction conſiſted chiefly of the maſts of the Perſian veſſels. Notwithſtanding the repairs beſtowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod reſtored its ancient beauty and magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that illuſtrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The moſt ſplendid ornaments beſtowed on the temple of Neptune in the Iſthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a ſtadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canuſium in Italy, were inſufficient to exhauſt his treaſures. The people of Epirus, Theſſaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponneſus, experienced his favours; and many inſcriptions of the cities of Greece and Aſia gratefully ſtyle Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor [70].

Moſt of the Roman monuments for public uſe;

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modeſt ſimplicity of private houſes announced the equal condition of freedom;

[69] Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i. 2. ix. 2. xviii. 10. xix. 12. Philoſtrat. p. 564.

[70] See Philoſtrat. l. ii. p. 548. 560. Pauſanias, l. 1. and vii. 10. The life of Herodes, in the xxxth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inſcriptions.

whilſt

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temples, theatres, equeducts, &c.

whilſt the ſovereignty of the people was repreſented in the majeſtic edifices deſtined to the public uſe[71]; nor was this republican ſpirit totally extinguiſhed by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit, that the moſt virtuous of the emperors affected to diſplay their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a juſt indignation, but the vaſt extent of ground which had been uſurped by his ſelfiſh luxury, was more nobly filled under the ſucceeding reigns by the Coliſeum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddeſs of Peace, and to the genius of Rome[72]. Theſe monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the moſt beautiful productions of Grecian painting and ſculpture; and in the temple of Peace, a very curious library was open to the curioſity of the learned. At a ſmall diſtance from thence was ſituated the Forum of Trajan. It was ſurrounded with a lofty portico, in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and ſpacious entrance: in the centre aroſe a column of marble, whoſe height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which ſtill ſubſiſts in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact repreſentation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran ſoldier contemplated the ſtory of his own campaigns, and by an eaſy illuſion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen aſſociated himſelf to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire,

[71] It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciæ, p. 8. inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudſon.

[72] Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii. c. 4, 5, 6. Nardini Roma Antica, l. iii. 11, 12, 13. and a MS. deſcription of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny, as in the Temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus.

were

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were embelliſhed by the ſame liberal ſpirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, all variouſly conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleaſures of the meaneſt citizen. The laſt mentioned of thoſe edifices deſerve our peculiar attention. The boldneſs of the enterpriſe, the ſolidity of the execution, and the uſes to which they were ſubſervient, rank the aqueducts among the nobleſt monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a juſt pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of hiſtory, ſhould examine thoſe of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude, that thoſe provincial towns had formerly been the reſidence of ſome potent monarch. The ſolitudes of Aſia and Africa were once covered with flouriſhing cities, whoſe populouſneſs, and even whoſe exiſtence, was derived from ſuch artificial ſupplies of a perennial ſtream of freſh water[73].

Number and greatneſs of the cities of the empire.

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The obſervation of the number and greatneſs of its cities will ſerve to confirm the former, and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleaſing to collect a few ſcattered inſtances relative to that ſubject, without forgetting, however, that from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently beſtowed on Rome and upon Laurentum.

In Italy.

Ancient Italy is ſaid to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-ſeven cities; and for whatſoever æra of antiquity the expreſſion might be intended[74], there is not any reaſon to believe the country leſs populous in the age of the Antonines, than

[73] Montfaucon l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 9. Fabretti has compoſed a very learned treatiſe on the aqueducts of Rome.

[74] Ælian Hiſt. Var. l. ix. c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, l. iv. c. 21.

in

in that of Romulus. The petty ſtates of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whoſe ſuperior influence they had been attracted. Thoſe parts of Italy which have ſo long languiſhed under the lazy tyranny of prieſts and viceroys, had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the firſt ſymptoms of decay, which *they* experienced, were amply compenſated by the rapid improvements of the Ciſalpine Gaul. The ſplendor of Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was leſs celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna.

Gaul and Spain.

II. The ſpirit of improvement had paſſed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free ſpace for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the ſeat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the ſalutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boaſt of her twelve hundred cities[75]; and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itſelf, were little more than the rude and imperfect townſhips of a riſing people; the ſouthern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy[76]. Many were the cities of Gaul, Marſeilles, Arles, Niſmes, Narbonne, Thouloufe, Bourdeaux, Autun, Vienna, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whoſe ancient condition might ſuſtain an equal, and perhaps advantageous compariſon with their preſent ſtate. With regard to Spain, that country flouriſhed as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhauſted by the abuſe of her ſtrength, by America, and by ſuperſtition, her pride might poſſibly be confounded, if we required ſuch a liſt of three hundred and ſixty cities, as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Veſpaſian[77].

Africa.

III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the

[75] Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. The number, however, is mentioned, and ſhould be received with a degree of latitude.

[76] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5.

[77] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 3, 4. iv. 35. The liſt ſeems authentic and accurate: the diviſion of the provinces, and the different condition of the cities, are minutely diſtinguiſhed.

 authority

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authority of Carthage[78], nor is it likely that their numbers diminiſhed under the adminiſtration of the emperors: Carthage itſelf roſe with new ſplendor from its aſhes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, ſoon recovered all the advantages which can be ſeparated from independent ſovereignty. IV. The provinces of the eaſt preſent the contraſt of Roman magnificence with Turkiſh barbariſm. The ruins of antiquity ſcattered over uncultivated fields, and aſcribed, by ignorance, to the power of magic, ſcarcely afford a ſhelter to the oppreſſed peaſant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæſars, the proper Aſia alone contained five hundred populous cities[79], enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Aſia had once diſputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their reſpective merits were examined by the ſenate[80]. Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among theſe was Laodicea, whoſe ſplendor is ſtill diſplayed in its ruins[81]. Laodicea collected a very conſiderable revenue from its flocks of ſheep, celebrated for the fineneſs of their wool, and had received, a little before the conteſt, a legacy of above four hundred thouſand pounds by the teſtament of a generous citizen[82]. If ſuch was the poverty of Laodicea, what muſt have been the wealth of thoſe cities, whoſe claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Epheſus, who

Aſia.

[78] Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii. p. 1189.

[79] Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. Philoſtrat. in Vit. Sophiſt. l. ii. p. 548. Edit. Olear.

[80] Tacit. Annal. iv. 55. I have taken ſome pains in conſulting and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of thoſe eleven cities of Aſia; ſeven or eight are totally deſtroyed, Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnaſſus, Miletus, Epheſus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a ſtraggling village of two or three thouſand inhabitants. Magneſia, under the name of Guzel-hiſſar, a town of ſome conſequence; and Smyrna, a great city, peopled by an hundred thouſand ſouls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.

[81] See a very exact and pleaſing deſcription of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Aſia Minor, p. 225, &c.

[82] Strabo, l. xii. p. 866. He had ſtudied at Tralles.

ſo long diſputed with each other the titular primacy of Aſia[83]? The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a ſtill ſuperior rank in the empire: Antioch and Alexandria looked down with diſdain on a crowd of dependent cities[84], and yielded, with reluctance, to the majeſty of Rome itſelf.

Roman Roads.

All theſe cities were connected with each other, and with the capital by the public highways, which iſſuing from the Forum of Rome, traverſed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the diſtance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jeruſalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-weſt to the ſouth-eaſt point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thouſand and eighty Roman miles[85]. The public roads were accurately divided by mile-ſtones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little reſpect for the obſtacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadeſt and moſt rapid ſtreams[86]. The middle part of the road was raiſed into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, conſiſted of ſeveral ſtrata of ſand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large ſtones, or in ſome places, near the capital, with

[83] See a Diſſertation of M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xviii. Ariſtides pronounced an oration which is ſtill extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities.

[84] The inhabitants of Egypt, excluſive of Alexandria, amounted to ſeven millions and a half (Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16.). Under the military government of the Mamalukes, Syria was ſuppoſed to contain ſixty thouſand villages (Hiſtoire de Timur Bec, l. v. c. 20.).

[85] The following Itinerary may ſerve to convey ſome idea of the direction of the road, and of the diſtance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London 227. III. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne 45. V. Rheims 174. VI. Lyons 330. VII. Milan 324. VIII. Rome 426. IX. Brunduſium 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium 40. XI. Byzantium 711. XII. Ancyra 283. XIII. Tarſus 301. XIV. Antioch 141. XV. Tyre 252. XVI. Jeruſalem 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 Engliſh miles. See the Itineraries publiſhed by Weſſeling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.

[86] Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée, (tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 5.) has deſcribed the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Niſmes, &c.

granite.

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granite[87]. Such was the ſolid conſtruction of the Roman highways, whoſe firmneſs has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the ſubjects of the moſt diſtant provinces by an eaſy and familiar intercourſe; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country conſidered as completely ſubdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror.

Poſts.

The advantage of receiving the earlieſt intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to eſtabliſh, throughout their extenſive dominions, the regular inſtitution of poſts[88]. Houſes were every where erected at the diſtance only of five or ſix miles; each of them was conſtantly provided with forty horſes, and by the help of theſe relays, it was eaſy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads[89]. The uſe of the poſts was allowed to thoſe who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public ſervice, it was ſometimes indulged to the buſineſs or conveniency of private citizens[90].

Navigation.

Nor was the communication of the Roman empire leſs free and open by ſea than it was by land. The provinces ſurrounded and incloſed the Mediterranean; and Italy, in the ſhape of an immenſe promontory, advanced into the midſt of that great lake. The coaſts of Italy are, in general, deſtitute of ſafe harbours; but human induſtry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Oſtia, in particular, ſituate at the mouth of the

[87] Bergier Hiſtoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. 1 – 28.

[88] Procopius in Hiſt. Arcanâ, c. 30. Bergier. Hiſt. des grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodoſian. l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506—563. with Godefroy's learned commentary.

[89] In the time of Theodoſius, Cæſarius, a magiſtrate of high rank, went poſt from Antioch to Conſtantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the enſuing evening, and arrived at Conſtantinople the ſixth day about noon. The whole diſtance was 725 Roman, or 665 Engliſh miles. See Libanius Orat. xxii. and the Itineraria, p. 572–581.

[90] Pliny, though a favourite and a miniſter, made an apology for granting poſt-horſes to his wife on the moſt urgent buſineſs. Epiſt. x. 121, 122.

Tyber,

Tyber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was an uſeful monument of Roman greatneſs[91]. From this port, which was only ſixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried veſſels in ſeven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt[92].

Improvement of agriculture in the weſtern countries of the empire.

Whatever evils either reaſon or declamation have imputed to extenſive empire, the power of Rome was attended with ſome beneficial conſequences to mankind; and the ſame freedom of intercourſe which extended the vices, diffuſed likewiſe the improvements, of ſocial life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The eaſt was in the immemorial poſſeſſion of arts and luxury; whilſt the weſt was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either diſdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an eſtabliſhed government, the productions of happier climates, and the induſtry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the weſtern countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almoſt impoſſible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were ſucceſſively imported into Europe, from Aſia and Egypt[93]; but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much leſs of the utility, of an hiſtorical work, ſlightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almoſt all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many caſes, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had taſted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the

Introduction of fruits, &c.

[91] Bergier Hiſt. des grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.

[92] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xix. 1.

[93] It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phœnicians introduced ſome new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marſeilles and Gades.

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citron, and the orange, they contented themſelves with applying to all theſe new fruits the common denomination of appſe, diſcriminating them from each other by the addional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the iſland of Sicily, and moſt probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the ſkill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taſte, of the ſavage inhabitants[94]. A thouſand years afterwards, Italy could boaſt, that of the fourſcore moſt generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her ſoil[95]. The bleſſing was ſoon communicated to the Narbonneſe province of Gaul; but ſo intenſe was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impoſſible to ripen the grapes in thoſe parts of Gaul[96]. This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquiſhed; and there is ſome reaſon to believe, that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines[97]. 3. The olive, in the weſtern world, followed the progreſs of peace, of which it was conſidered as the ſymbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were ſtrangers to that uſeful plant; it was naturalized in thoſe countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flouriſh in the neighbourhood of the ſea, were inſenſibly exploded by induſtry and experience[98]. 4. The cultivation of flax was tranſported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoveriſh the particular lands on which it was ſown[99]. 5. The uſe of artificial graſſes became familiar to the

The vine.

The olive.

Flax.

Artificial graſs.

[94] See Homer Odyſſ. l. ix. v. 358.

[95] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xiv.

[96] Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 223. The intenſe cold of a Gallic winter was almoſt proverbial among the ancients.

[97] In the beginning of the ivth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyric. Veter. viii. 6. edit. Delphin.) ſpeaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the firſt plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is ſuppoſed by M. d'Anville to be the diſtrict of Beaune, celebrated, even at preſent, for one of the firſt growths of Burgundy.

[98] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xv.

[99] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xix.

farmers

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farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media[100]. The aſſured ſupply of wholeſome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the ſoil. To all theſe improvements may be added an aſſiduous attention to mines and fiſheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, ſerve to increaſe the pleaſures of the rich, and the ſubſiſtence of the poor. The elegant treatiſe of Columella deſcribes the advanced ſtate of the Spaniſh huſbandry, under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be obſerved, that thoſe famines which ſo frequently afflicted the infant republic, were ſeldom or never experienced by the extenſive empire of Rome. The accidental ſcarcity, in any ſingle province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

General plenty.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; ſince the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of an induſtrious and ingenious people was variouſly, but inceſſantly employed, in the ſervice of the rich. In their dreſs, their table, their houſes, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of ſplendour; whatever could ſooth their pride, or gratify their ſenſuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been ſeverely arraigned by the moraliſts of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happineſs, of mankind, if all poſſeſſed the neceſſaries, and none the ſuperfluities, of life. But in the preſent imperfect condition of ſociety, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, ſeems to be the only means that can correct the unequal diſ-

Arts of luxury.

[100] See the agreeable Eſſays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have ſaid of lucerne.

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tribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the ſkilful artiſt, who have obtained no ſhare in the diviſion of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the poſſeſſors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a ſenſe of intereſt, to improve thoſe eſtates, with whoſe produce they may purchaſe additional pleaſures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every ſociety, acted with much more diffuſive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would ſoon have been exhauſted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not inſenſibly reſtored to the induſtrious ſubjects, the ſums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impreſſed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its conſequences, ſometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

Foreign trade.

But it is no eaſy taſk to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The moſt remote countries of the ancient world were ranſacked to ſupply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The foreſt of Scythia afforded ſome valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the ſhores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were aſtoniſhed at the price which they received in exchange for ſo uſeleſs a commodity [101]. There was a conſiderable demand for Babylonian carpets, and other manufactures of the Eaſt; but the moſt important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the ſummer ſolſtice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty veſſels ſailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical aſſiſtance of the Monſoons, they traverſed the ocean in about forty days. The coaſt of Malabar, or the iſland of Ceylon [102],

[101] Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xxxviii. 11. The latter obſerved, with ſome humour, that even faſhion had not yet found out the uſe of amber. Nero ſent a Roman knight, to purchaſe great quantities on the ſpot, where it was produced; the coaſt of modern Pruſſia.

[102] Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Screndib by the Arabs. It was diſcovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the Eaſt.

was

was the uſual term of their navigation, and it was in thoſe markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Aſia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as ſoon as their rich cargo had been tranſported on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had deſcended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire [103]. The objects of oriental traffic were ſplendid and trifling: ſilk, a pound of which was eſteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold [104]; precious ſtones, among which the pearl claimed the firſt rank after the diamond [105]; and a variety of aromatics, that were conſumed in religious worſhip and the pomp of funerals. The labour and riſk of the voyage was rewarded with almoſt incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman ſubjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expence of the Public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, ſilver, on the ſide of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only inſtrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the ſenate, that, in the purchaſe of female ornaments, the wealth of the ſtate was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hoſtile nations [106]. The annual loſs is computed, by a writer of an inquiſitive but cenſorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thouſand pounds ſterling [107]. Such was the ſtyle of diſcontent, brooding over the dark proſpect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare

Gold and ſilver.

[103] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. vi. Strabo, l. xvii.

[104] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 224. A ſilk garment was conſidered as an ornament to a woman, but as a diſgrace to a man.

[105] The two great pearl fiſheries were the ſame as at preſent, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was ſupplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is deſcribed in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281.

[106] Tacit. Annal. iii. 52. In a ſpeech of Tiberius.

[107] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xii. 18. In another place he computes half that ſum; Quingenties H. S. for India excluſive of Arabia.

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the proportion between gold and ſilver, as it ſtood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Conſtantine, we ſhall diſcover within that period a very conſiderable increaſe [108]. There is not the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe that gold was become more ſcarce; it is therefore evident that ſilver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhauſting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly ſupplied the demands of commerce.

General felicity.

Notwithſtanding the propenſity of mankind to exalt the paſt, and to depreciate the preſent, the tranquil and proſperous ſtate of the empire was warmly felt, and honeſtly confeſſed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true "principles of ſocial life, laws, agriculture, and ſcience, which had "been firſt invented by the wiſdom of Athens, were now firmly "eſtabliſhed by the power of Rome, under whoſe auſpicious "influence, the fierceſt barbarians were united by an equal govern-"ment and common language. They affirm, that with the im-"provement of arts, the human ſpecies was viſibly multiplied. "They celebrate the increaſing ſplendour of the cities, the beau-"tiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an im-"menſe garden; and the long feſtival of peace, which was en-"joyed by ſo many nations, forgetful of their ancient animoſities, "and delivered from the apprehenſion of future danger [109]." Whatever ſuſpicions may be ſuggeſted by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which ſeems to prevail in theſe paſſages, the ſubſtance of them is perfectly agreeable to hiſtoric truth.

[108] The proportion which was 1 to 10, and 12½, roſe to 14⅔, the legal regulation of Conſtantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of ancient Coins, c. v.

[109] Among many other paſſages, ſee Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5.), Ariſtides (de Urbe Româ), and Tertullian (de Animâ, c. 30.)

It

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It was ſcarcely poſſible that the eyes of contemporaries ſhould diſcover in the public felicity the latent cauſes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a ſlow and ſecret poiſon into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the ſame level, the fire of genius was extinguiſhed, and even the military ſpirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robuſt, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum, ſupplied the legions with excellent ſoldiers, and conſtituted the real ſtrength of the monarchy. Their perſonal valour remained, but they no longer poſſeſſed that public courage which is nouriſhed by the love of independence, the ſenſe of national honour, the preſence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their ſovereign, and truſted for their defence to a mercenary army. The poſterity of their boldeſt leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and ſubjects. The moſt aſpiring ſpirits reſorted to the court or ſtandard of the emperors; and the deſerted provinces, deprived of political ſtrength or union, inſenſibly ſunk into the languid indifference of private life.

Decline of courage;

The love of letters, almoſt inſeparable from peace and refinement, was faſhionable among the ſubjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themſelves men of learning and curioſity. It was diffuſed over the whole extent of their empire; the moſt northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taſte for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were tranſcribed and ſtudied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the moſt liberal rewards ſought out the fainteſt glimmerings of literary merit [110]. The ſciences

of genius.

[110] Herodes Atticus gave the ſophiſt Polemo above eight thouſand pounds for three declamations. See Philoſtrat. l. i. p. 558. The Antonines founded a ſchool at Athens, in which profeſſors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great ſects of philoſophy, were maintained at the public expence for the inſtruction of youth. The ſalary of a philoſopher was ten thouſand drachmæ, between three and four hundred pounds a year. Similar

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ſciences of phyſic and aſtronomy were ſucceſsfully cultivated by the Greeks; the obſervations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are ſtudied by thoſe who have improved their diſcoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence paſſed away without having produced a ſingle writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant compoſition. The authority of Plato and Ariſtotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, ſtill reigned in the ſchools; and their ſyſtems, tranſmitted with blind deference from one generation of diſciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exerciſe the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, inſtead of kindling a fire like their own, inſpired only cold and ſervile imitations: or if any ventured to deviate from thoſe models, they deviated at the ſame time from good ſenſe and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination, after a long repoſe, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by a uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with thoſe bold ancients, who, by expreſſing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet was almoſt forgotten; that of Orator was uſurped by the ſophiſts. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was ſoon followed by the corruption of taſte.

Degeneracy.

The ſublime Longinus, who in ſomewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preſerved the ſpirit of ancient Athens,

Similar eſtabliſhments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. p. 353. edit. Reitz. Philoſtrat. l. ii. p. 566. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 21. Dion Caſſius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Juvenal himſelf, in a moroſe ſatire, which in every line betrays his own diſappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to ſay,

——O Juvenes, circumſpicit et agitat vos.
Materiamque ſibi Ducis indulgentia quærit.
Satir. vii. 20.

obſerves and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debaſed their ſentiments, enervated their courage, and depreſſed their talents. "In the ſame manner, ſays he, as ſome children al-"ways remain pigmies, whoſe infant limbs have been too cloſely "confined; thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and "habits of a juſt ſervitude, are unable to expand themſelves, or to "attain that well-proportioned greatneſs which we admire in the "ancients; who living under a popular government, wrote with the "ſame freedom as they acted [111]." This diminutive ſtature of mankind, if we purſue the metaphor, was daily ſinking below the old ſtandard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pygmies; when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They reſtored a manly ſpirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taſte and ſcience.

[111] Longin. de Sublim. c. 43. p. 229. edit. Toll. Here too we may ſay of Longinus, "his own example ſtrengthens all his laws." Inſtead of propoſing his ſentiments with a manly boldneſs, he inſinuates them with the moſt guarded caution, puts them into the mouth of a friend; and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a ſhew of refuting them himſelf.

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Of the Conſtitution of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines.

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Idea of a monarchy.

THE obvious definition of a monarchy ſeems to be that of a ſtate, in which a ſingle perſon, by whatſoever name he may be diſtinguiſhed, is intruſted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unleſs public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of ſo formidable a magiſtrate will ſoon degenerate into deſpotiſm. The influence of the clergy, in an age of ſuperſtition, might be uſefully employed to aſſert the rights of mankind; but ſo intimate is the connexion between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very ſeldom been ſeen on the ſide of the people. A martial nobility and ſtubborn commons, poſſeſſed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into conſtitutional aſſemblies, form the only balance capable of preſerving a free conſtitution againſt enterpriſes of an aſpiring prince.

Situation of Auguſtus.

Every barrier of the Roman conſtitution had been levelled by the vaſt ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the Triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, ſurnamed Cæſar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards Auguſtus, by the flattery of the ſenate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions [1], conſcious of their own ſtrength, and of the weakneſs of the conſtitution, habituated, during twenty years civil

[1] Oroſius, vi. 18.

war,

war, to every act of blood and violence, and paſſionately devoted to the houſe of Cæſar, from whence alone they had received, and expected, the moſt laviſh rewards. The provinces, long oppreſſed by the miniſters of the republic, ſighed for the government of a ſingle perſon, who would be the maſter, not the accomplice, of thoſe petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a ſecret pleaſure, the humiliation of the ariſtocracy, demanded only bread and public ſhows; and were ſupplied with both by the liberal hand of Auguſtus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almoſt univerſally embraced the philoſophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the preſent bleſſings of eaſe and tranquillity, and ſuffered not the pleaſing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the ſenate had loſt its dignity; many of the moſt noble families were extinct. The republicans of ſpirit and ability had periſhed in the field of battle, or in the proſcription. The door of the aſſembly had been deſignedly left open, for a mixed multitude of more than a thouſand perſons, who reflected diſgrace upon their rank, inſtead of deriving honour from it[2].

He reforms the ſenate.

The reformation of the ſenate, was one of the firſt ſteps in which Auguſtus laid aſide the tyrant, and profeſſed himſelf the father of his country. He was elected cenſor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the liſt of the ſenators, expelled a few members, whoſe vices or whoſe obſtinacy required a public example, perſuaded near two hundred to prevent the ſhame of an expulſion by a voluntary retreat, raiſed the qualification of a ſenator to about ten thouſand pounds, created a ſufficient number of Patrician families, and accepted for himſelf, the honourable title of Prince of the Senate, which had always been beſtowed, by the cenſors, on the citizen the moſt eminent for his honours and ſervices[3].

[2] Julius Cæſar introduced ſoldiers, ſtrangers, and half-barbarians, into the ſenate (Sueton. in Cæſar. c. 77. 80.). The abuſe became ſtill more ſcandalous after his death.

[3] Dion Caſſius, l. iii. p. 693. Suetonius in Auguſt. c. 55.

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But whilſt he thus reſtored the dignity, he deſtroyed the independence of the ſenate. The principles of a free conſtitution are irrecoverably loſt, when the legiſlative power is nominated by the executive.

Reſigns his uſurped power.

Before an aſſembly thus modelled and prepared, Auguſtus pronounced a ſtudied oration, which diſplayed his patriotiſm, and diſguiſed his ambition. "He lamented, yet excuſed, his paſt "conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of "his father's murder; the humanity of his own nature had ſome-"times given way to the ſtern laws of neceſſity, and to a forced "connexion with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony "lived, the republic forbad him to abandon her to a degenerate "Roman, and a barbarian queen. He was now at liberty to "ſatisfy his duty and his inclination. He ſolemnly reſtored the "ſenate and people to all their ancient rights; and wiſhed only to "mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, and to ſhare the "bleſſings which he had obtained for his country*."

Is prevailed upon to reſume it under the title of Emperor or General.

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had aſſiſted at this aſſembly) to deſcribe the various emotions of the ſenate; thoſe that were ſuppreſſed, and thoſe that were affected. It was dangerous to truſt the ſincerity of Auguſtus; to ſeem to diſtruſt it, was ſtill more dangerous. The reſpective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided ſpeculative inquirers; the preſent greatneſs of the Roman ſtate, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the ſoldiers, ſupplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and theſe general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidſt this confuſion of ſentiments, the anſwer of the ſenate was unanimous and deciſive. They refuſed to accept the reſignation of Auguſtus; they conjured

* Dion (l. liii. p. 698) gives us a prolix and bombaſt ſpeech on this great occaſion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Auguſtus.

him not to desert the republic, which he had saved. After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate; and consented to receive the government of the provinces, and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of PROCONSUL and IMPERATOR[5]. But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire, by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign[6].

Power of the Roman generals.

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious penalties, by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery[7]. The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were

[5] *Imperator* (from which we have derived Emperor) signified under the republic no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman *emperors* assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.

[6] Dion, l. liii. p. 703, &c.

[7] Livy Epitom. l. xiv. Valer. Maxim. vi. 3.

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ſuſpended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exerciſed an abſolute power of life and death; his juriſdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the ſentence was immediate and without appeal[8]. The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legiſlative authority. The moſt important reſolutions of peace and war were ſeriouſly debated in the ſenate, and ſolemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great diſtance from Italy, the generals aſſumed the liberty of directing them againſt whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged moſt advantageous for the public ſervice. It was from the ſucceſs, not from the juſtice, of their enterpriſes, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the uſe of victory, eſpecially after they were no longer controlled by the commiſſioners of the ſenate, they exerciſed the moſt unbounded deſpotiſm. When Pompey commanded in the eaſt, he rewarded his ſoldiers and allies, dethroned princes, divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and diſtributed the treaſures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained, by a ſingle act of the ſenate and people, the univerſal ratification of all his proceedings[9]. Such was the power over the ſoldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or aſſumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the ſame time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, adminiſtered

[8] See in the viiith book of Livy, the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Curſor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they aſſerted thoſe of military diſcipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, was obliged to reſpect the principle.

[9] By the laviſh but unconſtrained ſuffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command ſcarcely inferior to that of Auguſtus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the diſtribution of three or four millions ſterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with ſome oppoſition and delays in the ſenate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Caſſius, and the firſt book of the epiſtles to Atticus.

juſtice

juſtice as well as the finances, and exerciſed both the executive and legiſlative power of the ſtate.

Lieutenants of the emperor.

From what has been already obſerved in the firſt chapter of this work, ſome notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intruſted to the ruling hand of Auguſtus. But as it was impoſſible that he could perſonally command the legions of ſo many diſtant frontiers, he was indulged by the ſenate, as Pompey had already been, in the permiſſion of devolving the execution of his great office on a ſufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority theſe officers ſeemed not inferior to the ancient proconſuls; but their ſtation was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commiſſions at the will of a ſuperior, to whoſe *auſpicious* influence the merit of their action was legally attributed [10]. They were the repreſentatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his juriſdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conqueſts of Rome. It was ſome ſatisfaction, however, to the ſenate, that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The Imperial lieutenants were of conſular or prætorian dignity; the legions were commanded by ſenators, and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important truſt committed to a Roman knight.

Diviſion of the provinces between the emperor and the ſenate.

Within ſix days after Auguſtus had been compelled to accept ſo very liberal a grant, he reſolved to gratify the pride of the ſenate by an eaſy ſacrifice. He repreſented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuſe the laborious command of the armies and

[10] Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authoriſed to take the Auſpices in the name of the people. By an exact conſequence drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reſerved to the emperor; and his moſt ſucceſsful lieutenants were ſatisfied with ſome marks of diſtinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were invented in their favour.

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the frontiers; but he muſt inſiſt on being allowed to reſtore the more peaceful and ſecure provinces, to the mild adminiſtration of the civil magiſtrate. In the diviſion of the provinces, Auguſtus provided for his own power, and for the dignity of the republic. The proconſuls of the ſenate, particularly thoſe of Aſia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by ſoldiers. A law was paſſed, that wherever the emperor was preſent, his extraordinary commiſſion ſhould ſuperſede the ordinary juriſdiction of the governor, a cuſtom was introduced, that the new conqueſts belonged to the Imperial portion, and it was ſoon diſcovered, that the authority of the *Prince*, the favourite epithet of Auguſtus, was the ſame in every part of the empire.

The former preſerves his military command, and guards in Rome itſelf.

In return for this imaginary conceſſion, Auguſtus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him maſter of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preſerve his military command, ſupported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to thoſe citizens who were engaged in the ſervice by the military oath; but ſuch was the propenſity of the Romans to ſervitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magiſtrates, the ſenators, and the equeſtrian order, till the homage of flattery was inſenſibly converted into an annual and ſolemn proteſtation of fidelity.

Conſular and tribunitian powers.

Although Auguſtus conſidered a military force as the firmeſt foundation, he wiſely rejected it, as a very odious inſtrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magiſtracy, and artfully to collect, in his own perſon, all the ſcattered rays of civil juriſdiction. With this view, he permitted the ſenate to confer

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fer upon him, for his life, the powers of the conſular[11] and tribunitian offices[12], which were, in the ſame manner, continued to all his ſucceſſors. The conſuls had ſucceeded to the kings of Rome, and repreſented the dignity of the ſtate. They ſuperintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambaſſadors, and preſided in the aſſemblies both of the ſenate and people. The general control of the finances was intruſted to their care; and though they ſeldom had leiſure to adminiſter juſtice in perſon, they were conſidered as the ſupreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary juriſdiction; but whenever the ſenate empowered the firſt magiſtrate to conſult the ſafety of the commonwealth, he was raiſed by that degree above the laws, and exerciſed, in the defence of liberty, a temporary deſpotiſm[13]. The character of the tribunes was, in every reſpect, different from that of the conſuls. The appearance of the former was modeſt and humble; but their perſons were ſacred and inviolable. Their force was ſuited rather for oppoſition than for action. They were inſtituted to defend the oppreſſed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it neceſſary, to ſtop, by a ſingle word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic ſubſiſted, the dangerous influence, which either the conſul or the tribune might derive from their reſpective juriſdiction, was di-

[11] Cicero (de Legibus, iii. 3.) gives the conſular office the name of *Regia poteſtas*: and Polybius (l. vi. c. 3.) obſerves three powers in the Roman conſtitution. The monarchical was repreſented and exerciſed by the Conſuls.

[12] As the tribunitian power (diſtinct from the annual office) was firſt invented for the dictator Cæſar (Dion, l. xliv. p. 384.), we may eaſily conceive, that it was given as a reward for having ſo nobly aſſerted, by arms, the ſacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own Commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. i.

[13] Auguſtus exerciſed nine annual conſulſhips without interruption. He then moſt artfully refuſed that magiſtracy as well as the dictatorſhip, abſented himſelf from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the ſenate to inveſt him with a perpetual conſulſhip. Auguſtus, as well as his ſucceſſors, affected, however, to conceal ſo invidious a title.

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miniſhed by ſeveral important reſtrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten perſons; and, as both in their private and public intereſt they were averſe to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the moſt part, to ſtrengthen rather than to deſtroy the balance of the conſtitution. But when the conſular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were veſted for life in a ſingle perſon, when the general of the army was, at the ſame time, the miniſter of the ſenate and the repreſentative of the Roman people, it was impoſſible to reſiſt the exerciſe, nor was it eaſy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

Imperial prerogatives.

To theſe accumulated honours, the policy of Auguſtus ſoon added the ſplendid as well as important dignities of ſupreme pontiff, and of cenſor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inſpection over the manners and fortunes of the Roman people. If ſo many diſtinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaiſance of the ſenate was prepared to ſupply every deficiency by the moſt ample and extraordinary conceſſions. The emperors, as the firſt miniſters of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorized to convoke the ſenate, to make ſeveral motions in the ſame day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the ſtate, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their diſcretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a moſt comprehenſive clauſe, they were empowered to execute whatſoever they ſhould judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majeſty of things private or public, human or divine[14].

[14] See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the emperor Veſpaſian, all the powers granted to his predeceſſors, Auguſtus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is publiſhed in Gruter's Inſcriptions, No. ccxlii.

When

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The magiſtrates.

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *Imperial magiſtrate*, the ordinary magiſtrates of the commonwealth languiſhed in obſcurity, without vigour, and almoſt without buſineſs. The names and forms of the ancient adminiſtration were preſerved by Auguſtus with the moſt anxious care. The uſual number of conſuls, prætors, and tribunes [15], were annually inveſted with their reſpective enſigns of office, and continued to diſcharge ſome of their leaſt important functions. Thoſe honours ſtill attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themſelves, though inveſted for life with the powers of the conſulſhip, frequently aſpired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condeſcended to ſhare with the moſt illuſtrious of their fellow-citizens [16]. In the election of theſe magiſtrates, the people, during the reign of Auguſtus, were permitted to expoſe all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, inſtead of diſcovering the leaſt ſymptom of impatience, humbly ſolicited their ſuffrages for himſelf or his friends, and ſcrupulouſly practiſed all the duties of an ordinary candidate [17]. But we may venture to aſcribe to his councils, the firſt meaſure of the ſucceeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the ſenate [18]. The aſ-

[15] Two conſuls were created on the Calends of January; but in the courſe of the year others were ſubſtituted in their places, till the annual number ſeems to have amounted to no leſs than twelve. The prætors were uſually ſixteen or eighteen (Lipſius in Excurſ. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. i.). I have not mentioned the Ædiles or Quæſtors. Officers of the police or revenue eaſily adapt themſelves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally poſſeſſed the right of *interceſſion*, though it might be dangerous to exerciſe it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26.). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneſhip was an office or a name (Plin. Epiſt. i. 23.).

[16] The tyrants themſelves were ambitious of the conſulſhip. The virtuous princes were moderate in the purſuit, and exact in the diſcharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and ſwore before the conſul's tribunal, that he would obſerve the laws (Plin. Panegyric. c. 64.).

[17] Quoties Magiſtratuum Comitiis intereſſet. Tribus cum candidatis ſuis circuibat: ſupplicabatque more ſolemni. Ferebat et ipſe ſuffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in Auguſt. c. 56.

[18] Tum primum Comitia e campo ad patres tranſlata ſunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word *primum* ſeems to allude to ſome faint and unſucceſsful efforts, which were made towards reſtoring them to the people.

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ſemblies of the people were for ever aboliſhed, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without reſtoring liberty, might have diſturbed, and perhaps endangered, the eſtabliſhed government.

The ſenate.

By declaring themſelves the protectors of the people, Marius and Cæſar had ſubverted the conſtitution of their country. But as ſoon as the ſenate had been humbled and diſarmed, ſuch an aſſembly, conſiſting of five or ſix hundred perſons, was found a much more tractable and uſeful inſtrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the ſenate, that Auguſtus and his ſucceſſors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occaſion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the adminiſtration of their own powers, they frequently conſulted the great national council, and *ſeemed* to refer to its deciſion the moſt important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces were ſubject to the immediate juriſdiction of the ſenate. With regard to civil objects, it was the ſupreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, conſtituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public ſtation, or that affected the peace and majeſty of the Roman people. The exerciſe of the judicial power became the moſt frequent and ſerious occupation of the ſenate; and the important cauſes that were pleaded before them, afforded a laſt refuge to the ſpirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of ſtate, and as a court of juſtice, the ſenate poſſeſſed very conſiderable prerogatives; but in its legiſlative capacity, in which it was ſuppoſed virtually to repreſent the people, the rights of ſovereignty were acknowledged to reſide in that aſſembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their ſanction. Their regular meetings were held on three ſtated days in every month, the Calends, the Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors

themſelves, who gloried in the name of ſenators, ſat, voted, and divided with their equals.

General idea of the Imperial ſyſtem.

To reſume, in a few words, the ſyſtem of the Imperial government; as it was inſtituted by Auguſtus, and maintained by thoſe princes who underſtood their own intereſt and that of the people, it may be defined an abſolute monarchy diſguiſed by the forms of a commonwealth. The maſters of the Roman world ſurrounded their throne with darkneſs, concealed their irreſiſtible ſtrength, and humbly profeſſed themſelves the accountable miniſters of the ſenate, whoſe ſupreme decrees they dictated and obeyed [19].

Court of the emperors.

The face of the court correſponded with the forms of the adminiſtration. The emperors, if we except thoſe tyrants whoſe capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, diſdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they affected to confound themſelves with their ſubjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourſe of viſits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were ſuited only to the rank of an opulent ſenator. Their family, however numerous or ſplendid, was compoſed entirely of their domeſtic ſlaves and freedmen [20]. Auguſtus or Trajan would have bluſhed at employing the meaneſt of the Romans in thoſe menial offices, which, in the houſehold and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are ſo eagerly ſolicited by the proudeſt nobles of Britain.

[19] Dion Caſſius (l. liii. p. 703—714.) has given a very looſe and partial ſketch of the Imperial ſyſtem. To illuſtrate and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and conſulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bleterie, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv. xxv. xxvii. Beaufort, Republique Romaine, tom. i. p. 255—275. The Diſſertations of Noodt and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*; printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479—544. of his Opuſcula. Maffei Verona Illuſtrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.

[20] A weak prince will always be governed by his domeſtics. The power of ſlaves aggravated the ſhame of the Romans; and the ſenate paid court to a Pallas or a Narciſſus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

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Deification.

The deification of the emperors[21] is the only inſtance in which they departed from their accuſtomed prudence and modeſty. The Aſiatic Greeks were the firſt inventors, the ſucceſſors of Alexander the firſt objects, of this ſervile and impious mode of adulation. It was eaſily transferred from the kings to the governors of Aſia; and the Roman magiſtrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of feſtivals and ſacrifices[22]. It was natural that the emperors ſhould not refuſe what the proconſuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces, atteſted rather the deſpotiſm than the ſervitude of Rome. But the conquerors ſoon imitated the vanquiſhed nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious ſpirit of the firſt Cæſar too eaſily conſented to aſſume, during his life-time, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his ſucceſſor declined ſo dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madneſs of Caligula and Domitian. Auguſtus permitted indeed ſome of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they ſhould aſſociate the worſhip of Rome with that of the ſovereign; he tolerated private ſuperſtition, of which he might be the object[23]; but he contented himſelf with being revered by the ſenate and people in his human character, and wiſely left to his ſucceſſor, the care of his public deification. A regular cuſtom was introduced, that on the deceaſe of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the ſenate by a ſolemn decree ſhould place him in the number of the

[21] See a treatiſe of Vandale de Conſecratione Principium. It would be eaſier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

[22] See a diſſertation of the Abbé Mongault in the firſt volume of the Academy of Inſcriptions.

[23] Jurandaſque tuum per nomen ponimus *aras*, ſays Horace to the emperor himſelf, and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Auguſtus.

gods:

gods: and the ceremonies of his Apotheoſis were blended with thoſe of his funeral. This legal, and as it ſhould ſeem, injudicious profanation, ſo abhorrent to our ſtricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur[24], by the eaſy nature of Polytheiſm; but it was received as an inſtitution, not of religion but of policy. We ſhould diſgrace the virtues of the Antonines, by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the character of Cæſar or Auguſtus were far ſuperior to thoſe of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of ſuch a mixture of fable and myſtery, as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As ſoon as their divinity was eſtabliſhed by law, it ſunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame, or to the dignity of ſucceeding princes.

Titles of *Auguſtus* and *Cæſar*.

In the conſideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Auguſtus, which was not however conferred upon him, till the edifice was almoſt completed. The obſcure name of Octavianus, he derived from a mean family, in the little town of Aricia. It was ſtained with the blood of the proſcription; and he was deſirous, had it been poſſible, to eraſe all memory of his former life. The illuſtrious ſurname of Cæſar, he had aſſumed, as the adopted ſon of the dictator; but he had too much good ſenſe, either to hope to be confounded, or to wiſh to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was propoſed in the ſenate, to dignify their miniſter with a new appellation: and after a very ſerious diſcuſſion, that of Auguſtus was choſen among ſeveral others, as being the moſt expreſſive of the character of peace and ſanctity, which he uni-

[24] See Cicero in Philippic. i. 6. Julian in Cæſaribus. Inque Deûm templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expreſſion of Lucan, but it is a patriotic, rather than a devout indignation.

formly

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formly affected [25]. *Auguſtus* was therefore a perſonal, *Cæſar* a family diſtinction. The former ſhould naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was beſtowed; and however the latter was diffuſed by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the laſt prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inſeparably connected thoſe appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preſerved by a long ſucceſſion of emperors, Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the preſent time. A diſtinction was, however, ſoon introduced. The ſacred title of Auguſtus was always reſerved for the monarch, whilſt the name of Cæſar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian, at leaſt, was appropriated to the ſecond perſon in the ſtate, who was conſidered as the preſumptive heir of the empire.

Character and policy of Auguſtus.

The tender reſpect of Auguſtus for a free conſtitution which he had deſtroyed, can only be explained by an attentive conſideration of the character of that ſubtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly diſpoſition, prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to aſſume the maſk of hypocriſy, which he never afterwards laid aſide. With the ſame hand, and probably with the ſame temper, he ſigned the proſcription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his intereſt, he was at firſt the enemy, and at laſt the father, of the Roman world [26]. When he framed the artful ſyſtem of the Imperial authority, his moderation

[25] Dion Caſſius, l. liii. p. 710. with the curious Annotations of Reymar.

[26] As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Cæſars, his colour changed like that of the Camelion; pale at firſt, then red, afterwards black, he at laſt aſſumed the mild livery of Venus and the Graces (Cæſars, p. 309.). This image employed by Julian, in his ingenious fiction, is juſt and elegant; but when he conſiders this change of character as real, and aſcribes it to the power of philoſophy, he does too much honour to philoſophy, and to Octavianus.

was

was inſpired by his fears. He wiſhed to deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government.

Image of liberty for the people.

I. The death of Cæſar was ever before his eyes. He had laviſhed wealth and honours on his adherents; but the moſt favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conſpirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority againſt open rebellion; but their vigilance could not ſecure his perſon from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus [27], would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæſar had provoked his fate, as much by the oſtentation of his power, as by his power itſelf. The conſul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans againſt his life. Auguſtus was ſenſible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation, that the ſenate and people would ſubmit to ſlavery, provided they were reſpectfully aſſured, that they ſtill enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble ſenate and enervated people cheerfully acquieſced in the pleaſing illuſion, as long as it was ſupported by the virtue, or by even the prudence, of the ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. It was a motive of ſelf-preſervation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conſpirators againſt Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked the perſon of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

Attempt of the ſenate after the death of Caligula.

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occaſion, in which the ſenate, after ſeventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reaſſume its long forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the conſuls convoked that aſſembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæſars, gave the watch-word *liberty* to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their

[27] Two centuries after the eſtabliſhment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

ſtandard,

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ſtandard, and during eight and forty hours acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the Prætorian guards had reſolved. The ſtupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, inveſted with the Imperial purple, and prepared to ſupport his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the ſenate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable ſervitude. Deſerted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble aſſembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the Prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amneſty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generoſity to obſerve [28].

Image of government for the armies.

II. The inſolence of the armies inſpired Auguſtus with fears of a ſtill more alarming nature. The deſpair of the citizens could only attempt, what the power of the ſoldiers was, at any time, able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every ſocial duty! He had heard their ſeditious clamours; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchaſed by immenſe rewards; but a ſecond revolution might double thoſe rewards. The troops profeſſed the fondeſt attachment to the houſe of Cæſar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconſtant. Auguſtus ſummoned to his aid, whatever remained in thoſe fierce minds, of Roman prejudices; enforced the rigour of diſcipline by the ſanction of law; and interpoſing the majeſty of the ſenate, between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance, as the firſt magiſtrate of the republic [29].

[28] It is much to be regretted, that we have loſt the part of Tacitus, which treated of that tranſaction. We are forced to content ourſelves with the popular rumours of Joſephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.

[29] Auguſtus reſtored the ancient ſeverity of diſcipline. After the civil wars, he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only Soldiers (Sueton. in Auguſt c. 25.). See the uſe Tiberius made of the ſenate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i.).

During

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Their obedience.

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the eſtabliſhment of this artful ſyſtem to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great meaſure, ſuſpended. The ſoldiers were ſeldom rouſed to that fatal ſenſe of their own ſtrength, and of the weakneſs of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of ſuch dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were aſſaſſinated in their palace by their own domeſtics: the convulſions which agitated Rome on the death of the former, were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin. In the ſpace of eighteen months, four princes periſhed by the ſword; and the Roman world was ſhaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this ſhort, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Auguſtus to Commodus paſſed away unſtained with civil blood, and undiſturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by *the authority of the ſenate*, and *the conſent of the ſoldiers*[30]. The legions reſpected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inſpection of the Roman annals to diſcover three inconſiderable rebellions, which were all ſuppreſſed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle[31].

Deſignation of a ſucceſſor.

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and miſchief. The Roman emperors, deſirous to ſpare the legions that interval of ſuſpenſe, and the temptation of an irregular choice, inveſted their deſigned ſucceſſor with ſo large a ſhare of preſent power, as ſhould enable him, after their deceaſe, to

[30] Theſe words ſeem to have been the conſtitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4.

[31] The firſt was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia againſt Claudius, and was deſerted by his own troops in five days. The ſecond, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled againſt Domitian; and the third, Avidius Caſſius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two laſt reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may obſerve, that both Camillus and Caſſius coloured their ambition with the deſign of reſtoring the republic; a taſk, ſaid Caſſius, peculiarly reſerved for his name and family.

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Of Tiberius.

assume the remainder, without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with an authority equal to his own, over the provinces and the armies[32]. Thus Vespasian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. Titus was adored by the eastern legions, which, under his command, had recently atchieved the conquest of Judæa. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father[33].

Of Titus.

The race of the Cæsars and the Flavian family.

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him indeed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of an hundred years, to the name and family of the Cæsars: and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse, that the Prætorian guards had been persuaded to abandon the cause of the tyrant[34]. The rapid downfal of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the instruments of *their* licence. The birth of Vespasian was mean; his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a

[32] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 20.

[33] Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Præfat. Hist. Natur.

[34] This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist. i. 5. 16. ii. 76.

petty

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petty officer of the revenue[35]; his own merit had raiſed him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather uſeful than ſhining, and his virtues were diſgraced by a ſtrict and even ſordid parſimony. Such a prince conſulted his true intereſt by the aſſociation of a ſon, whoſe more ſplendid and amiable character might turn the public attention, from the obſcure origin, to the future glories of the Flavian houſe. Under the mild adminiſtration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a tranſient felicity, and his beloved memory ſerved to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

A. D. 96. Adoption and character of Trajan.

Nerva had ſcarcely accepted the purple from the aſſaſſins of Domitian, before he diſcovered that his feeble age was unable to ſtem the torrent of public diſorders, which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predeceſſor. His mild diſpoſition was reſpected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whoſe juſtice ſhould ſtrike terror into the guilty. Though he had ſeveral relations, he fixed his choice on a ſtranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the ſenate, declared him his colleague and ſucceſſor in the empire[36]. It is ſincerely to be lamented, that whilſt we are fatigued with the diſguſtful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the ſuſpicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the ſenate, in pouring out the cuſtomary acclamations on the acceſſion of a new emperor, wiſhed that he might ſurpaſs the felicity of Auguſtus, and the virtue of Trajan[37]. A. D. 98.

[35] The emperor Veſpaſian, with his uſual good ſenſe, laughed at the Genealogiſts, who deduced his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Suet. in Veſpaſian. c. 12.

[36] Dion, l. lxviii. p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric.

[37] Felicior Auguſto, MELIOR TRAJANO. Eutrop. viii. 5.

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A. D. 117. Of Hadrian.

We may readily believe, that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to intrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption[38]; the truth of which could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was peaceably acknowledged as his lawful successor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views, and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign, he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus[39].

Adoption of the elder and younger Verus.

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several men of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous[40]. But whilst Hadrian was delighting himself with

[38] Dion (l. lxix. p. 1249.) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained, that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire, during the lifetime of Trajan.

[39] Dion (l. lxx. p. 1171). Aurel. Victor.

[40] The deification of Antinous, his medals, statues, temples, city, oracles, and constellation,

with his own applauſe, and the acclamations of the ſoldiers, whoſe conſent had been ſecured by an immenſe donative, the new Cæſar [41] was raviſhed from his embraces by an untimely death. He left only one ſon. Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the acceſſion of Marcus, was inveſted with an equal ſhare of ſovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he poſſeſſed one virtue; a dutiful reverence for his wiſer colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philoſophic emperor diſſembled his follies, lamented his early death, and caſt a decent veil over his memory.

Adoption of the two Antonines.

As ſoon as Hadrian's paſſion was either gratified or diſappointed, he reſolved to deſerve the thanks of poſterity, by placing the moſt exalted merit on the Roman throne. His diſcerning eye eaſily diſcovered a ſenator about fifty years of age, blameleſs in all the offices of life, and a youth of about ſeventeen, whoſe riper years opened the fair proſpect of every virtue: the elder of theſe was declared the ſon and ſucceſſor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himſelf ſhould immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now ſpeaking) governed the Roman world forty-two years, with the ſame invariable ſpirit of wiſdom and virtue. Although Pius had two ſons [42], he preferred the welfare of Rome to the intereſt of his family, gave his daughter Fauſtina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the ſenate the tribunitian and proconſular powers, and with a noble diſdain, or rather ignorance of jealouſy, aſſociated him to all the labours of

A. D. 138—180.

lation, are well known, and ſtill diſhonour the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the firſt fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whoſe taſte in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, ſee Spanheim, Commentaire ſur les Cæſars de Julien, p. 80.

[41] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 13. Aurelius Victor in Epitom.

[42] Without the help of medals and inſcriptions, we ſhould be ignorant of this fact, ſo honourable to the memory of Pius.

government.

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government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his ſovereign[43], and, after he was no more, regulated his own adminiſtration by the example and maxims of his predeceſſor. Their united reigns are poſſibly the only period of hiſtory in which the happineſs of a great people was the ſole object of government.

Character and reign of Pius.

Titus Antoninus Pius has been juſtly denominated a ſecond Numa. The ſame love of religion, juſtice, and peace, was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of both princes. But the ſituation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exerciſe of thoſe virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harveſts. Antoninus diffuſed order and tranquillity over the greateſt part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furniſhing very few materials for hiſtory; which is, indeed, little more than the regiſter of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life, he was an amiable, as well as a good man. The native ſimplicity of his virtue was a ſtranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed, with moderation, the conveniencies of his fortune, and the innocent pleaſures of ſociety[44]; and the benevolence of his ſoul diſplayed itſelf in a cheerful ſerenity of temper.

Of Marcus.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a ſeverer and more laborious kind[45]. It was the well-earned harveſt of many a

[43] During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights abſent from the palace, and even thoſe were at different times. Hiſt. Auguſt p. 25.

[44] He was fond of the theatre, and not inſenſible to the charms of the fair ſex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 20, 21. Julian in Cæſar.

[45] The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocriſy, and with a want of that ſimplicity which diſtinguiſhed Pius and even Verus (Hiſt. Aug. 6. 34.). This ſuſpicion, unjuſt as it was, may ſerve to account for the ſuperior applauſe beſtowed upon perſonal qualifications, in preference to the ſocial virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildeſt ſcepticiſm never inſinuated that Cæſar might poſſibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more eaſily aſcertained, than humanity or the love of juſtice.

learned

learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid ſyſtem of the Stoics, which taught him to ſubmit his body to his mind, his paſſions to his reaſon; to conſider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external, as things indifferent[46]. His meditations, compoſed in the tumult of a camp, are ſtill extant; and he even condeſcended to give leſſons of philoſophy, in a more public manner, than was perhaps conſiſtent with the modeſty of a ſage, or the dignity of an emperor[47]. But his life was the nobleſt commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was ſevere to himſelf, indulgent to the imperfection of others, juſt and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Caſſius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had diſappointed him, by a voluntary death, of the pleaſure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he juſtified the ſincerity of that ſentiment, by moderating the zeal of the ſenate againſt the adherents of the traitor[48]. War he deteſted, as the diſgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the neceſſity of a juſt defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily expoſed his perſon to eight winter campaigns, on the frozen banks of the Danube, the ſeverity of which was at laſt fatal to the weakneſs of his conſtitution. His memory was revered by a grateful poſterity, and above a century after his death, many perſons preſerved the image of Marcus Antoninus among thoſe of their houſehold gods[49].

[46] Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the portico: Doctores ſapientiæ ſecutus eſt, qui ſola bona quæ honeſta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 5.

[47] Before he went on the ſecond expedition againſt the Germans, he read lectures of philoſophy to the Roman people, during three days. He had already done the ſame in the cities of Greece and Aſia. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Caſſio, c. 3.

[48] Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1190. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Avid. Caſſio.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

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Happineſs of the Romans.

If a man were called to fix the period in the hiſtory of the world, during which the condition of the human race was moſt happy and proſperous, he would, without heſitation, name that which elapſed from the death of Domitian to the acceſſion of Commodus. The vaſt extent of the Roman empire was governed by abſolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wiſdom. The armies were reſtrained by the firm but gentle hand of four ſucceſſive emperors, whoſe characters and authority commanded involuntary reſpect. The forms of the civil adminiſtration were carefully preſerved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleaſed with conſidering themſelves as the accountable miniſters of the laws. Such princes deſerved the honour of reſtoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

Its precarious nature.

The labours of theſe monarchs were over-paid by the immenſe reward that inſeparably waited on their ſucceſs; by the honeſt pride of virtue, and by the exquiſite delight of beholding the general happineſs of which they were the authors. A juſt, but melancholy reflection embitterred, however, the nobleſt of human enjoyments. They muſt often have recollected the inſtability of a happineſs which depended on the character of a ſingle man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when ſome licentious youth, or ſome jealous tyrant, would abuſe, to the deſtruction, that abſolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal reſtraints of the ſenate and the laws might ſerve to diſplay the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irreſiſtible inſtrument of oppreſſion; and the corruption of Roman manners would always ſupply flatterers eager to applaud, and miniſters prepared to ſerve, the fear or the avarice, the luſt or the cruelty, of their maſters.

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Memory of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

Theſe gloomy apprehenſions had been already juſtified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a ſtrong and various picture of human nature, which we ſhould vainly ſeek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern hiſtory. In the conduct of thoſe monarchs we may trace the utmoſt lines of vice and virtue; the moſt exalted perfection, and the meaneſt degeneracy of our own ſpecies. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almoſt ſuperfluous to enumerate the unworthy ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. Their unparalleled vices, and the ſplendid theatre on which they were acted, have ſaved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beaſtly Vitellius [50], and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlaſting infamy. During fourſcore years (excepting only the ſhort and doubtful reſpite of Veſpaſian's reign [51]) Rome groaned beneath an unremiting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almoſt every virtue, and every talent, that aroſe in that unhappy period.

Peculiar miſery of the Romans under their tyrants.

Under the reign of theſe monſters, the ſlavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumſtances, the one occaſioned by their former liberty, the other by their extenſive conqueſts, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From theſe cauſes were derived, 1. The exquiſite ſenſibility of the

[50] Vitellius conſumed in mere eating, at leaſt ſix millions of our money, in about ſeven months. It is not eaſy to expreſs his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog; but it is by ſubſtituting to a coarſe word a very fine image. "At "Vitellius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, "ut *ignava animalia*, quibus ſi cibum ſug- "geras jacent torpentque, præterita, inſtan- "tia, futura, pari oblivione dimiſerat. Atque "illum nemore Aricino deſidem et marcen- "tem, &c." Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 36. ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion Caſſius, l. lxv. p. 1062.

[51] The execution of Helvidius Priſcus, and of the virtuous Eponina, diſgraced the reign of Veſpaſian.

 ſufferers;

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ſufferers; and, 2. the impoſſibility of eſcaping from the hand of the oppreſſor.

Inſenſibility of the Orientals.

I. When Perſia was governed by the deſcendants of Sefi, a race of princes, whoſe wanton cruelty often ſtained their divan, their table, and their bed, with the blood of their favourites, there is a ſaying recorded of a young nobleman, That he never departed from the ſultan's preſence, without ſatisfying himſelf whether his head was ſtill on his ſhoulders. The experience of every day might almoſt juſtify the ſcepticiſm of Ruſtan [52]. Yet the fatal ſword ſuſpended above him by a ſingle thread, ſeems not to have diſturbed the ſlumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Perſian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the duſt; but the ſtroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wiſe man, to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's ſlave; had, perhaps, been purchaſed from obſcure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the ſevere diſcipline of the ſeraglio [53]. His name, his wealth, his honours, were the gift of a maſter, who might, without injuſtice, reſume what he had beſtowed. Ruſtan's knowledge, if he poſſeſſed any, could only ſerve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except abſolute monarchy. The hiſtory of the eaſt informed him, that ſuch had ever been the condition of mankind [54]. The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him, that the ſultan was the deſcendant

[52] Voyage de Chardin en Perſe, vol. iii. p. 293.

[53] The practice of raiſing ſlaves to the great offices of ſtate is ſtill more common among the Turks than among the Perſians. The miſerable countries of Georgia and Circaſſia ſupply rulers to the greateſt part of the eaſt.

[54] Chardin ſays, that European travellers have diffuſed among the Perſians ſome ideas of the freedom and mildneſs of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.

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of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the firſt virtue of a Muſſulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a ſubject.

Knowledge and free ſpirit of the Romans.

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for ſlavery. Oppreſſed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preſerved the ſentiments, or at leaſt the ideas, of their freeborn anceſtors. The education of Helvidius and Thraſea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the ſame as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philoſophy, they had imbibed the juſteſt and moſt liberal notions of the dignity of human nature, and the origin of civil ſociety. The hiſtory of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the ſucceſsful crimes of Cæſar and Auguſtus; and inwardly to deſpiſe thoſe tyrants whom they adored with the moſt abject flattery. As magiſtrates and ſenators, they were admitted into the great council, which had once dictated laws to the earth, whoſe name ſtill gave a ſanction to the acts of the monarch, and whoſe authority was ſo often proſtituted to the vileſt purpoſes of tyranny. Tiberius, and thoſe emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to diſguiſe their murders by the formalities of juſtice, and perhaps enjoyed a ſecret pleaſure in rendering the ſenate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this aſſembly, the laſt of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accuſers aſſumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public ſervice was rewarded by riches and honours [55]. The ſervile judges profeſſed

[55] They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66). Marcellus Epirus and Criſpus Vibius had acquired two millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Veſpaſian. See Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accuſation, Regulus, the juſt object of Pliny's ſatire, received from the ſenate the conſular ornaments, and a preſent of ſixty-thouſand pounds.

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to aſſert the majeſty of the commonwealth, violated in the perſon of its firſt magiſtrate [56], whoſe clemency they moſt applauded when they trembled the moſt at his inexorable and impending cruelty [57]. The tyrant beheld their baſeneſs with juſt contempt, and encountered their ſecret ſentiments of deteſtation with ſincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the ſenate.

Extent of their empire left them no place of refuge.

II. The diviſion of Europe into a number of independent ſtates, connected, however, with each other, by the general reſemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the moſt beneficial conſequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who ſhould find no reſiſtance either in his own breaſt, or in his people, would ſoon experience a gentle reſtraint from the example of his equals, the dread of preſent cenſure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehenſion of his enemies. The object of his diſpleaſure, eſcaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would eaſily obtain, in a happier climate, a ſecure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a ſingle perſon, the world became a ſafe and dreary priſon for his enemies. The ſlave of Imperial deſpotiſm, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the ſenate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in ſilent deſpair [58]. To reſiſt was fatal, and it was impoſſible

[56] The crime of *majeſty* was formerly a treaſonable offence againſt the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Auguſtus and Tiberius applied it to their own perſons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.

[57] After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the ſenate for his clemency. She had not been publicly ſtrangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniæ, where thoſe of common malefactors were expoſed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 53.

[58] Seriphus was a ſmall rocky iſland in the Ægean Sea, the inhabitants of which were deſpiſed for their ignorance and obſcurity.

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impoſſible to fly. On every ſide he was encompaſſed with a vaſt extent of ſea and land, which he could never hope to traverſe without being diſcovered, ſeized, and reſtored to his irritated maſter. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could diſcover nothing, except the ocean, inhoſpitable deſerts, hoſtile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchaſe the emperor's protection by the ſacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive [59]. "Wherever you are," ſaid Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power "of the conqueror [60]."

The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his juſt, but unmanly lamentations. It ſhould ſeem, that he only received an order to leave Rome in ſo many days, and to tranſport himſelf to Tomi. Guards and gaolers were unneceſſary.

[59] Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was ſtopt in the Streights of Sicily; but ſo little danger did there appear in the example, that the moſt jealous of tyrants diſdained to puniſh it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14.

[60] Cicero ad Familiares, iv. 7.

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The cruelty, follies, and murder of Commodus.—Election of Pertinax—his attempts to reform the State—his aſſaſſination by the Prætorian Guards.

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Indulgence of Marcus,

THE mildneſs of Marcus, which the rigid diſcipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the ſame time, the moſt amiable, and the only defective, part of his character. His excellent underſtanding was often deceived by the unſuſpecting goodneſs of his heart. Artful men, who ſtudy the paſſions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his perſon in the diſguiſe of philoſophic ſanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to deſpiſe them [1]. His exceſſive indulgence to his brother, his wife, and his ſon, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and conſequences of their vices.

to his wife Fauſtina;

Fauſtina, the daughter of Pius and the wife of Marcus, has been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave ſimplicity of the philoſopher was ill-calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded paſſion for variety, which often diſcovered perſonal merit in the meaneſt of mankind [2]. The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very ſenſual deity; and the amours of an empreſs, as they exact on her ſide the plaineſt advances, are ſeldom ſuſceptible of much ſentimental delicacy.

[1] See the complaints of Avidius Caſſius, Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 45. Theſe are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

[2] Fauſtinam ſatis conſtat apud Cayetam, *conditiones* ſibi et nauticas et gladiatorias, elegiſſe. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 30. Lampridius explains the ſort of merit which Fauſtina choſe, and the *conditions* which ſhe exacted. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 102.

Marcus was the only man in the empire who ſeemed ignorant or inſenſible of the irregularities of Fauſtina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected ſome diſgrace on the injured huſband. He promoted ſeveral of her lovers to poſts of honour and profit [3], and during a connexion of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the moſt tender confidence, and of a reſpect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations, he thanks the gods, who had beſtowed on him a wife, ſo faithful, ſo gentle, and of ſuch a wonderful ſimplicity of manners [4]. The obſequious ſenate, at his earneſt requeſt, declared her a goddeſs. She was repreſented in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed, that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either ſex ſhould pay their vows before the altar of their chaſte patroneſs [5].

to his ſon Commodus.

The monſtrous vices of the ſon have caſt a ſhade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he ſacrificed the happineſs of millions to a fond partiality for a worthleſs boy; and that he choſe a ſucceſſor in his own family, rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he ſummoned to his aſſiſtance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to render him worthy of the throne, for which he was deſigned. But the power of inſtruction is ſeldom of much efficacy, except in thoſe happy diſpoſitions where it is almoſt ſuperfluous. The diſtaſteful leſſon of a grave philoſopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whiſper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himſelf blaſted the fruits of this

[3] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 34.

[4] Meditat. l. i. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madam Dacier aſſures us (and we may credit a lady), that the huſband will always be deceived, if the wife condeſcends to diſſemble.

[5] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 33. Commentaire de Spanheim ſur les Cæſars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Fauſtina is the only defect which Julian's criticiſm is able to diſcover in the all-accompliſhed character of Marcus.

laboured

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laboured education, by admitting his ſon, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards; but he lived long enough to repent a raſh meaſure, which raiſed the impetuous youth above the reſtraint of reaſon and authority.

Acceſſion of the emperor Commodus.

Moſt of the crimes which diſturb the internal peace of ſociety, are produced by the reſtraints which the neceſſary, but unequal laws of property, have impoſed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the poſſeſſion of thoſe objects that are coveted by many. Of all our paſſions and appetites, the love of power is of the moſt imperious and unſociable nature, ſince the pride of one man requires the ſubmiſſion of the multitude. In the tumult of civil diſcord, the laws of ſociety loſe their force, and their place is ſeldom ſupplied by thoſe of humanity. The ardor of contention, the pride of victory, the deſpair of ſucceſs, the memory of paſt injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to ſilence the voice of pity. From ſuch motives almoſt every page of hiſtory has been ſtained with civil blood; but theſe motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to wiſh, and every thing to enjoy. The beloved ſon of Marcus ſucceeded to his father, amidſt the acclamations of the ſenate and armies[6], and when he aſcended the throne, the happy youth ſaw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to puniſh. In this calm elevated ſtation, it was ſurely natural, that he ſhould prefer the love of mankind to their deteſtation, the mild glories of his five predeceſſors, to the ignominious fate of Nero, and Domitian.

A. D. 180.

Character of Commodus.

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been repreſented, a tiger born with an inſatiate thirſt of human blood, and capable, from his

[6] Commodus was the firſt *Porphyrogenetus* (born ſince his father's acceſſion to the throne). By a new ſtrain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life; as if they were ſynonymous to thoſe of his reign. Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. ii. p. 752.

infancy,

infancy, of the moſt inhuman actions[7]. Nature had formed him of a weak, rather than a wicked diſpoſition. His ſimplicity and timidity rendered him the ſlave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at firſt obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling paſſion of his ſoul[8].

He returns to Rome.

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himſelf embarraſſed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war againſt the Quadi and Marcomanni[9]. The ſervile and profligate youths whom Marcus had baniſhed, ſoon regained their ſtation and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardſhips and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they aſſured the indolent prince, that the terror of his name and the arms of his lieutenants would be ſufficient to complete the conqueſt of the diſmayed barbarians; or to impoſe ſuch conditions, as were more advantageous than any conqueſt. By a dextrous application to his ſenſual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the ſplendour, the refined pleaſures of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leiſure nor materials for luxury[10]. Commodus liſtened to the pleaſing advice; but whilſt he heſitated between his own inclination, and the awe which he ſtill retained for his father's counſellors, the ſummer inſenſibly elapſed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful perſon[11], popular addreſs, and imagined virtues, attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians, diffuſed an uni-

[7] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46.

[8] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxii. p. 1203.

[9] According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25.), he died at Sirmium. But the ſituation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war againſt the Marcomanni and Quadi.

[10] Herodian, l. i. p. 12.

[11] Herodian, l. i. p. 16.

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verſal joy [12]; his impatience to reviſit Rome was fondly aſcribed to the love of his country; and his diſſolute courſe of amuſements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three firſt years of his reign, the forms, and even the ſpirit of the old adminiſtration were maintained by thoſe faithful counſellors, to whom Marcus had recommended his ſon, and for whoſe wiſdom and integrity Commodus ſtill entertained a reluctant eſteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the licence of ſovereign power; but his hands were yet unſtained with blood; and he had even diſplayed a generoſity of ſentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into ſolid virtue [13]. A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

Is wounded by an aſſaſſin. A. D. 183.

One evening as the emperor was returning to the palace through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre [14], an aſſaſſin, who waited his paſſage, ruſhed upon him with a drawn ſword, loudly exclaiming, "*The ſenate ſends you this.*" The menace prevented the deed; the aſſaſſin was ſeized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conſpiracy. It had been formed, not in the ſtate, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's ſiſter, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the ſecond rank, and jealous of the reigning empreſs, had armed the murderer againſt her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black deſign to her ſecond huſband Claudius Pompeianus, a ſenator of diſtinguiſhed merit and unſhaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for ſhe imitated the manners of Fauſtina) ſhe found men of deſperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to ſerve her more violent, as well as her tender paſſions.

[12] This univerſal joy is well deſcribed (from the medals as well as hiſtorians) by Mr. Wotton, Hiſt. of Rome, p. 192, 193.

[13] Manilius, the confidential ſecretary of Avidius Caſſius, was diſcovered after he had lain concealed ſeveral years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refuſing to ſee him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion Caſſius, l. lxxii. p. 1209.

[14] See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126.

The

The conſpirators experienced the rigor of juſtice, and the abandoned princeſs was puniſhed firſt with exile, and afterwards with death [15].

Hatred and cruelty of Commodus towards the ſenate.

But the words of the aſſaſſin ſunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impreſſion of fear and hatred againſt the whole body of the ſenate. Thoſe whom he had dreaded as importunate miniſters, he now ſuſpected as ſecret enemies. The Delators, a race of men diſcouraged, and almoſt extinguiſhed, under the former reigns, again became formidable, as ſoon as they diſcovered that the emperor was deſirous of finding diſaffection and treaſon in the ſenate. That aſſembly, whom Marcus had ever conſidered as the great council of the nation, was compoſed of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the Romans; and diſtinction of every kind ſoon became criminal. The poſſeſſion of wealth ſtimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit cenſure of the irregularities of Commodus; important ſervices implied a dangerous ſuperiority of merit; and the friendſhip of the father always enſured the averſion of the ſon. Suſpicion was equivalent to proof. Trial to condemnation. The execution of a conſiderable ſenator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once taſted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorſe.

The Quintilian brothers.

Of theſe innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus; whoſe fraternal love has ſaved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to poſterity. Their ſtudies and their occupations, their purſuits and their pleaſures, were ſtill the ſame. In the enjoyment of a great eſtate, they never admitted the idea of a ſeparate intereſt; ſome fragments are now extant of a treatiſe which they compoſed in common; and in every action of

[15] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1205. Herodian, l. i. p. 16. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46.

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life it was obſerved, that their two bodies were animated by one ſoul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues, and delighted in their union, raiſed them, in the ſame year, to the conſulſhip: and Marcus afterwards intruſted to their joint care, the civil adminiſtration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a ſignal victory over the Germans. The kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death [16].

The miniſter Perennis.

The tyrant's rage, after having ſhed the nobleſt blood of the ſenate, at length recoiled on the principal inſtrument of his cruelty. Whilſt Commodus was immerſed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public buſineſs on Perennis; a ſervile and ambitious miniſter, who had obtained his poſt by the murder of his predeceſſor, but who poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited eſtates of the nobles ſacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immenſe treaſure. The Prætorian guards were under his immediate command; and his ſon, who already diſcovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aſpired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the ſame crime, he was capable of aſpiring to it, had he not been prevented, ſurpriſed, and put to
A. D. 186. death. The fall of a miniſter is a very trifling incident in the general hiſtory of the empire; but it was haſtened by an extraordinary circumſtance, which proved how much the nerves of diſcipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, diſcontented with the adminiſtration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred ſelect men, with inſtructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. Theſe military petitioners, by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the diviſions of the guards, by exaggerating the ſtrength of the Britiſh army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the mi-

[16] In a note upon the Auguſtan Hiſtory, Caſaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning theſe celebrated brothers. See p. 96 of his learned commentary.

niſter's

niſter's death, as the only redreſs of their grievances [17]. This preſumption of a diſtant army, and their diſcovery of the weakneſs of government, was a ſure preſage of the moſt dreadful convulſions.

Revolt of Maternus.

The negligence of the public adminiſtration was betrayed ſoon afterwards, by a new diſorder which aroſe from the ſmalleſt beginnings. A ſpirit of deſertion began to prevail among the troops; and the deſerters, inſtead of ſeeking their ſafety in flight or concealment, infeſted the highways. Maternus, a private ſoldier, of a daring boldneſs above his ſtation, collected theſe bands of robbers into a little army, ſet open the priſons, invited the ſlaves to aſſert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceleſs cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the ſpectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were, at length, rouſed from their ſupine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompaſſed, and foreſaw that he muſt be overpowered. A great effort of deſpair was his laſt reſource. He ordered his followers to diſperſe, to paſs the Alps in ſmall parties and various diſguiſes, and to aſſemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the feſtival of Cybele [18]. To murder Commodus, and to aſcend the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His meaſures were ſo ably concerted, that his concealed troops already filled the ſtreets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice diſcovered and ruined this ſingular enterpriſe, in the moment when it was ripe for execution [19].

[17] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1210. Herodian, l. i. p. 22. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48. Dion gives a much leſs odious character of Perennis, than the other hiſtorians. His moderation is almoſt a pledge of his veracity.

[18] During the ſecond Punic war, the Romans imported from Aſia the worſhip of the mother of the gods. Her feſtival, the *Megaleſia*, began on the fourth of April, and laſted ſix days. The ſtreets were crowded with mad proceſſions, the theatres with ſpectators; and the public tables with unbidden gueſts. Order and police were ſuſpended, and pleaſure was the only ſerious buſineſs of the city. See Ovid. de Faſtis, l. iv. 189, &c.

[19] Herodian, l. i. p. 23. 28.

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The miniſter Cleander.

Suſpicious princes often promote the laſt of mankind from a vain perſuaſion, that thoſe who have no dependence, except on their favour, will have no attachment, except to the perſon of their benefactor. Cleander, the ſucceſſor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation, over whoſe ſtubborn, but ſervile temper, blows only could prevail [20]. He had been ſent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a ſlave. As a ſlave he entered the Imperial palace, rendered himſelf uſeful to his maſter's paſſions, and rapidly aſcended to the moſt exalted ſtation which a ſubject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predeceſſor; for Cleander was devoid of any ability or virtue which could inſpire the emperor with envy or diſtruſt. Avarice was the reigning paſſion of his ſoul, and the great principle of his adminiſtration. The rank of Conſul, of Patrician, of Senator, was expoſed to public ſale; and it would have been conſidered as diſaffection, if any one had refuſed to purchaſe theſe empty and diſgraceful honours with the greateſt part of his fortune [21]. In the lucrative provincial employments, the miniſter ſhared with the governor the ſpoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reverſal of the ſentence by which he was juſtly condemned; but might likewiſe inflict whatever puniſhment he pleaſed on the accuſer, the witneſſes, and the judge.

His avarice and cruelty.

By theſe means, Cleander, in the ſpace of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been poſſeſſed by any freedman [22]. Commodus was perfectly ſatisfied with the magnificent preſents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the moſt

[20] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27.

[21] One of theſe dear-bought promotions occaſioned a current bon mot, that Julius Solon was *baniſhed* into the ſenate.

[22] Dion (l. lxxii. p. 12, 13.) obſerves, that no freedman had poſſeſſed riches equal to thoſe of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five and twenty hundred thouſand pounds; *Ter millies.*

ſeaſonable

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ſeaſonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exerciſe, for the uſe of the people[23]. He flattered himſelf that the Romans, dazzled and amuſed by this apparent liberality, would be leſs affected by the bloody ſcenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a ſenator to whoſe ſuperior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters; and that they would forgive the execution of Arrius Antoninus, the laſt repreſentative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to diſcloſe, to his brother-in-law, the true character of Cleander. An equitable ſentence pronounced by the latter, when Proconſul of Aſia, againſt a worthleſs creature of the favourite, proved fatal to him[24]. After the fall of Perennis, the terrors of Commodus had, for a ſhort time, aſſumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the moſt odious of his acts, loaded his memory with the public execration, and aſcribed to the pernicious counſels of that wicked miniſter, all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance laſted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the adminiſtration of Perennis was often regretted.

Sedition and death of Cleander. A. D. 189.

Peſtilence and famine contributed to fill up the meaſure of the calamities of Rome[25]. The firſt could be only imputed to the juſt indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, ſupported by the riches and power of the miniſter, was conſidered as the immediate cauſe of the ſecond. The popular diſcontent, after it had long circulated in whiſpers, broke out in the aſſembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amuſements, for the more delicious pleaſure of revenge, ruſhed in crowds towards a palace in the

[23] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 12, 13. Herodian, l. i. p. 2[illegible]. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52. Theſe baths were ſituated near the *Porta Capena*. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 79.

[24] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48.

[25] Herodian, l. i. p. 28. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1215. The latter ſays, that two thouſand perſons died every day at Rome, during a conſiderable length of time.

ſuburbs;

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ſuburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the Prætorian guards[26], ordered a body of cavalry to ſally forth, and diſperſe the ſeditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; ſeveral were ſlain, and many more were trampled to death: but when the cavalry entered the ſtreets, their purſuit was checked by a ſhower of ſtones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houſes. The foot guards[27], who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and inſolence of the Prætorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general maſſacre. The Prætorians, at length, gave way, oppreſſed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury returned with redoubled violence againſt the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay, diſſolved in luxury, and alone unconſcious of the civil war. It was death to approach his perſon with the unwelcome news. He would have periſhed in this ſupine ſecurity, had not two women, his eldeſt ſiſter Fadilla, and Marcia, the moſt favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his preſence. Bathed in tears, and with diſhevelled hair, they threw themſelves at his feet; and with all the preſſing eloquence of fear, diſcovered to the affrighted emperor, the crimes of the miniſter, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin, which, in a few minutes, would burſt over his palace and perſon. Commodus ſtarted from his dream of pleaſure, and commanded that the head of Cleander ſhould be thrown out to

[26] Tuncque primum tres præfecti prætorio fuere: inter quos libertinus. From ſome remains of modeſty, Cleander declined the title, whilſt he aſſumed the powers, of Prætorian præfect. As the other freedmen were ſtyled, from their ſeveral departments, *a rationibus*, *ab epiſtolis*; Cleander called himſelf *a pugione*, as intruſted with the defence of his maſter's perſon. Salmaſius and Caſaubon ſeem to have talked very idly upon this paſſage.

[27] Ὁι τῆς πόλεως πέζοι στρατιῶται. Herodian, l. i. p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the Prætorian infantry, or the cohortes urbanæ, a body of ſix thouſand men, but whoſe rank and diſcipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton chuſe to decide this queſtion.

the

the people. The deſired ſpectacle inſtantly appeaſed the tumult; and the ſon of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his ſubjects[28].

Diſſolute pleaſures of Commodus.

But every ſentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilſt he thus abandoned the reins of empire to theſe unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in ſovereign power, except the unbounded licence of indulging his ſenſual appetites. His hours were ſpent in a ſeraglio of three hundred beautiful women, and as many boys, of every rank, and of every province; and, wherever the arts of ſeduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourſe to violence. The ancient hiſtorians[29] have expatiated on theſe abandoned ſcenes of proſtitution, which ſcorned every reſtraint of nature or modeſty; but it would not be eaſy to tranſlate their too faithful deſcriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals of luſt were filled up with the baſeſt amuſements. The influence of a polite age, and the labour of an attentive education, had never been able to infuſe into his rude and brutiſh mind, the leaſt tincture of learning; and he was the firſt of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taſte for the pleaſures of the underſtanding. Nero himſelf excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of muſic and poetry; nor ſhould we deſpiſe his purſuits, had he not converted the pleaſing relaxation of a leiſure hour into the ſerious buſineſs and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earlieſt infancy, diſcovered an averſion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amuſements of the populace; the ſports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beaſts. The maſters in every branch of

His ignorance and low ſports.

[28] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxii. p. 1215. Herodian, l. i. p. 32. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48.

[29] Sororibus ſuis conſtupratis. Ipſas concubinas ſuas ſub oculis ſuis ſtuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in ſe juvenum carebat infamiâ, omni parte corporis atque ore in ſexum utrumque pollutus. Hiſt. Aug. p. 47.

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learning, whom Marcus provided for his ſon, were heard with inattention and diſguſt; whilſt the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to ſhoot with the bow, found a diſciple who delighted in his application, and ſoon equalled the moſt ſkilful of his inſtructors, in the ſteadineſs of the eye, and the dexterity of the hand.

Hunting of wild beaſts.

The ſervile crowd, whoſe fortune depended on their maſter's vices, applauded theſe ignoble purſuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him, that by exploits of the ſame nature, by the defeat of the Nemæan lion, and the ſlaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to obſerve, that, in the firſt ages of ſociety, when the fiercer animals often diſpute with man the poſſeſſion of an unſettled country, a ſucceſsful war againſt thoſe ſavages is one of the moſt innocent and beneficial labours of heroiſm. In the civilized ſtate of the Roman empire, the wild beaſts had long ſince retired from the face of man, and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To ſurpriſe them in their ſolitary haunts, and to tranſport them to Rome, that they might be ſlain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterpriſe equally ridiculous for the prince, and oppreſſive for the people [30]. Ignorant of theſe diſtinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious reſemblance, and ſtiled himſelf (as we ſtill read on his medals [31]) the *Roman Hercules*. The club and the lion's hide were placed by the ſide of the throne, amongſt the enſigns of ſo-

[30] The African lions, when preſſed by hunger, infeſted the open villages and cultivated country; and they infeſted them with impunity. The royal beaſt was reſerved for the pleaſures of the emperor and the capital; and the unfortunate peaſant, who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary *game-law* was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Juſtinian. Codex Theodoſ. tom. v. p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred.

[31] Spanheim de Numiſmat. Diſſert. xii. tom. ii. p. 493.

vereignty;

vereignty; and ſtatues were erected, in which Commodus was repreſented in the character, and with the attributes, of the god, whoſe valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily courſe of his ferocious amuſements[32].

Commodus diſplays his ſkill in the amphitheatre.

Elated with theſe praiſes, which gradually extinguiſhed the innate ſenſe of ſhame, Commodus reſolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the Roman people, thoſe exerciſes, which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace, and to the preſence of a few favourites. On the appointed day, the various motives of flattery, fear, and curioſity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of ſpectators; and ſome degree of applauſe was deſervedly beſtowed on the uncommon ſkill of the Imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows, whoſe point was ſhaped into the form of a creſcent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career, and cut aſunder the long bony neck of the oſtrich[33]. A panther was let looſe; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the ſame inſtant the ſhaft flew, the beaſt dropt dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheatre diſgorged at once a hundred lions; a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the *Arena*. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant, nor the ſcaly hide of the rhinoceros, could defend them from his ſtroke. Æthiopia and India yielded their moſt extraordinary productions; and ſeveral animals were ſlain in the amphitheatre, which had been ſeen only in the repreſentations of art, or perhaps of fancy[34]. In all theſe exhibitions, the ſecureſt precautions

[32] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1216. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 49.

[33] The oſtrich's neck is three feet long, and compoſed of ſeventeen vertebræ. See Buffon, Hiſt. Naturelle.

[34] Commodus killed a camelopardalis or Giraffe (Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1211), the talleſt, the moſt gentle, and the moſt uſeleſs of the large quadrupeds. This ſingular animal, a native

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tions were uſed to protect the perſon of the Roman Hercules from the deſperate ſpring of any ſavage; who might poſſibly diſregard the dignity of the emperor, and the ſanctity of the god[35].

Acts as a gladiator.

But the meaneſt of the populace were affected with ſhame and indignation when they beheld their ſovereign enter the liſts as a gladiator, and glory in a profeſſion which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the juſteſt note of infamy[36]. He choſe the habit and arms of the *Secutor*, whoſe combat with the *Retiarius* formed one of the moſt lively ſcenes in the bloody ſports of the amphitheatre. The *Secutor* was armed with an helmet, ſword, and buckler; his naked antagoniſt had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle, with the other to diſpatch, his enemy. If he miſſed the firſt throw, he was obliged to fly from the purſuit of the *Secutor*, till he had prepared his net for a ſecond caſt[37]. The emperor fought in this character ſeven hundred and thirty-five ſeveral times. Theſe glorious atchievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and that he might omit no circumſtance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators, a ſtipend ſo exorbitant, that it became a new and moſt ignominious tax upon the Roman people[38]. It may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that in theſe engagements the maſter of the world was always ſucceſsful: in the amphitheatre his victories were not

native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been ſeen in Europe ſince the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hiſt. Naturelle, tom. xiii.) has endeavoured to deſcribe, he has not ventured to delineate, the Giraffe.

[35] Herodian, l. i. p. 37. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 50.

[36] The virtuous and even the wiſe princes forbade the ſenators and knights to embrace this ſcandalous profeſſion, under pain of infamy, or, what was more dreaded by thoſe profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to diſhonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced, in the Arena, forty ſenators and ſixty knights. See Lipſius, Saturnalia, l. ii. c. 2. He has happily corrected a paſſage of Suetonius, in Nerone, c. 12.

[37] Lipſius, l. ii. c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth ſatire, gives a picturesque deſcription of this combat.

[38] Hiſt. Aug. p. 50. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1220. He received, for each time, *decies*, about 8000l. ſterling.

often

often ſanguinary; but when he exerciſed his ſkill in the ſchool of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagoniſts were frequently honoured with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to ſeal their flattery with their blood[39]. He now diſdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated Secutor, was the only one which delighted his ear. It was inſcribed on his coloſſal ſtatues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations[40] of the mournful and applauding ſenate[41]. Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous huſband of Lucilla, was the only ſenator who aſſerted the honour of his rank. As a father, he permitted his ſons to conſult their ſafety by attending the amphitheatre. As a Roman, he declared, that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the ſon of Marcus proſtituting his perſon and dignity. Notwithſtanding his manly reſolution, Pompeianus eſcaped the reſentment of the tyrant, and, with his honour, had the good fortune to preſerve his life[42].

His infamy and extravagance.

Commodus had now attained the ſummit of vice and infamy. Amidſt the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to diſguiſe, from himſelf, that he had deſerved the contempt and hatred of every man of ſenſe and virtue in his empire. His ferocious ſpirit was irritated by the conſciouſneſs of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the juſt apprehenſion of danger, and by the habit of ſlaughter, which he contracted in his daily amuſements. Hiſtory has preſerved a long liſt of conſular ſenators ſacri-

Conſpiracy of his domeſtics.

[39] Victor tells us, that Commodus only allowed his antagoniſts a leaden weapon, dreading moſt probably the conſequences of their deſpair.

[40] They were obliged to repeat ſix hundred and twenty-ſix times, *Paulus firſt of the Secutors*, &c.

[41] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1221. He ſpeaks of his own baſeneſs and danger.

[42] He mixed however ſome prudence with his courage, and paſſed the greateſt part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakneſs of his eyes. "I never ſaw him in the ſenate, ſays Dion, "except during the ſhort reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had ſuddenly left him, and they returned as ſuddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1227.

ficed

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ficed to his wanton ſuſpicion, which ſought out, with peculiar anxiety, thoſe unfortunate perſons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without ſparing even the miniſters of his crimes or pleaſures [43]. His cruelty proved at laſt fatal to himſelf. He had ſhed with impunity the nobleſt blood of Rome: he periſhed as ſoon as he was dreaded by his own domeſtics. Marcia, his favourite concubine, Eclectus his chamberlain, and Lætus his Prætorian præfect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predeceſſors, reſolved to prevent the deſtruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the ſudden indignation of the people. Marcia ſeized the occaſion of preſenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himſelf with hunting ſome wild beaſts. Commodus retired to ſleep; but whilſt he was labouring with the effects of poiſon and drunkenneſs, a robuſt youth, by profeſſion a wreſtler, entered his chamber, and ſtrangled him without reſiſtance. The body was ſecretly conveyed out of the palace, before the leaſt ſuſpicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the ſon of Marcus, and ſo eaſy was it to deſtroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppreſſed, during thirteen years, ſo many millions of ſubjects, each of whom was equal to their maſter in perſonal ſtrength and perſonal abilities [44].

Death of Commodus. A. D. 192. 31ſt December.

Choice of Pertinax for emperor.

The meaſures of the conſpirators were conducted with the deliberate coolneſs and celerity which the greatneſs of the occaſion required. They reſolved inſtantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor, whoſe character would juſtify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, præfect of the city, an ancient

[43] The præfects were changed almoſt hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his moſt favoured chamberlains. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46. 51.

[44] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1222. Herodian. l. i. p. 43. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52.

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ſenator of conſular rank, whoſe conſpicuous merit had broke through the obſcurity of his birth, and raiſed him to the firſt honours of the ſtate. He had ſucceſſively governed moſt of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the firmneſs, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct[45]. He now remained almoſt alone of the friends and miniſters of Marcus; and when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news, that the chamberlain and the præfect were at his door, he received them with intrepid reſignation, and deſired they would execute their maſter's orders. Inſtead of death, they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During ſome moments he diſtruſted their intentions and aſſurances. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a ſincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the ſupreme rank[46].

He is acknowledged by the Prætorian guards,

Lætus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Prætorians, diffuſing at the ſame time through the city a ſeaſonable report that Commodus died ſuddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* ſucceeded to the throne. The guards were rather ſurpriſed than pleaſed with the ſuſpicious death of a prince, whoſe indulgence and liberality they alone had experi-

[45] Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and ſon of a timber-merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deſerves to be ſet down, as expreſſive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Præfect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *Ala*, or ſquadron of horſe, in Mæſia. 4. He was commiſſary of proviſions on the Æmilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a ſalary of about 1600l. a year. 7. He commanded the Veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of ſenator. 9. Of prætor. 10. With the command of the firſt legion in Rhætia and Noricum. 11. He was conſul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the eaſt. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was conſular legate of Mæſia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public proviſions at Rome. 19. He was proconſul of Africa. 20. Præfect of the city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48.) does juſtice to his diſintereſted ſpirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him with a great fortune acquired by bribery and corruption.

[46] Julian, in the Cæſars, taxes him with being acceſſary to the death of Commodus.

enced;

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enced; but the emergency of the occaſion, the authority of their præfect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the people, obliged them to ſtifle their ſecret diſcontents, to accept the donative promiſed of the new emperor, to ſwear allegiance to him, and with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands to conduct him to the ſenate-houſe, that the military conſent might be ratified by the civil authority.

and by the ſenate. A. D. 193. 1ſt January.

This important night was now far ſpent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the ſenators expected a ſummons to attend an ignominious ceremony. In ſpite of all remonſtrances, even of thoſe of his creatures, who yet preſerved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had reſolved to paſs the night in the gladiators ſchool, and from thence to take poſſeſſion of the conſulſhip, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a ſudden, before the break of day, the ſenate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor. For a few minutes they ſat in ſilent ſuſpence, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and ſuſpicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus; but when at length they were aſſured that the tyrant was no more, they reſigned themſelves to all the tranſports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modeſtly repreſented the meanneſs of his extraction, and pointed out ſeveral noble ſenators more deſerving than himſelf of the empire, was conſtrained by their dutiful violence to aſcend the throne, and received all the titles of Imperial power, confirmed by the moſt ſincere vows of fidelity. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, reſounded in every corner of the houſe. They decreed in tumultuous votes, that his honours ſhould be reverſed, his titles eraſed from the public monuments, his ſtatues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the ſtripping-room of the gladiators,

The memory of Commodus declared infamous.

to

to ſatiate the public fury; and they expreſſed ſome indignation againſt thoſe officious ſervants who had already preſumed to ſcreen his remains from the juſtice of the ſenate. But Pertinax could not refuſe thoſe laſt rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his firſt protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented ſtill more that he had deſerved it [47].

Legal juriſdiction of the ſenate over the emperors.

Theſe effuſions of impotent rage againſt a dead emperor, whom the ſenate had flattered when alive with the moſt abject ſervility, betrayed a juſt but ungenerous ſpirit of revenge. The legality of theſe decrees was however ſupported by the principles of the Imperial conſtitution. To cenſure, to depoſe, or to puniſh with death, the firſt magiſtrate of the republic, who had abuſed his delegated truſt, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman ſenate [48]; but that feeble aſſembly was obliged to content itſelf with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public juſtice, from which, during his life and reign, he had been ſhielded by the ſtrong arm of military deſpotiſm.

Virtues of Pertinax.

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predeceſſor's memory; by the contraſt of his own virtues, with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his acceſſion, he reſigned over to his wife and ſon his whole private fortune; that they might have no pretence to ſolicit favours at the expence of the ſtate. He refuſed to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Auguſta; or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Cæſar. Accurately diſtinguiſhing between the duties of a parent, and thoſe of a ſovereign, he educated his ſon with a ſevere ſimplicity, which,

[47] Capitolinus gives us the particulars of theſe tumultuary votes which were moved by one ſenator, and repeated, or rather chanted by the whole body. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52.

[48] The ſenate condemned Nero to be put to death *more majorum*. Sueton. c. 49.

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while it gave him no aſſured proſpect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public, the behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the ſenate (and in a private ſtation, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual), without either pride or jealouſy; conſidered them as friends and companions, with whom he had ſhared the dangers of the tyranny, and with whom he wiſhed to enjoy the ſecurity of the preſent time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by thoſe, who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus[49].

He endeavours to reform the ſtate.

To heal, as far as it was poſſible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleaſing, but melancholy, taſk of Pertinax. The innocent victims, who yet ſurvived, were recalled from exile, releaſed from priſon, and reſtored to the full poſſeſſion of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered ſenators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itſelf beyond death) were depoſited in the ſepulchres of their anceſtors; their memory was juſtified; and every conſolation was beſtowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among theſe conſolations, one of the moſt grateful was the puniſhment of the Delators; the common enemies of their maſter, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquiſition of theſe legal aſſaſſins, Pertinax proceeded with a ſteady temper, which gave every thing to juſtice, and nothing to popular prejudice and reſentment.

His regulations,

The finances of the ſtate demanded the moſt vigilant care of the emperor. Though every meaſure of injuſtice and extortion had been adopted, which could collect the property of the ſubject into

[49] Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1223.) ſpeaks of theſe entertainments, as a ſenator who had ſupped with the emperor. Capitolinus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 58.), like a ſlave, who had received his intelligence from one of the ſcullions.

the

the coffers of the prince; the rapaciouſneſs of Commodus had been ſo very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than eight thouſand pounds were found in the exhauſted treaſury[50], to defray the current expences of government, and to diſcharge the preſſing demand of a liberal donative, which the new emperor had been obliged to promiſe to the Prætorian guards. Yet under theſe diſtreſſed circumſtances, Pertinax had the generous firmneſs to remit all the oppreſſive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjuſt claims of the treaſury; declaring in a decree of the ſenate, "that he was better ſatisfied to adminiſter a poor re-"public with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways of ty-"ranny and diſhonour." Oeconomy and induſtry he conſidered as the pure and genuine ſources of wealth; and from them he ſoon derived a copious ſupply for the public neceſſities. The expence of the houſehold was immediately reduced to one half. All the inſtruments of luxury, Pertinax expoſed to public auction[51], gold and ſilver plate, chariots of a ſingular conſtruction, a ſuperfluous wardrobe of ſilk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful ſlaves of both ſexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, thoſe who were born in a ſtate of freedom, and had been raviſhed from the arms of their weeping parents. At the ſame time that he obliged the worthleſs favourites of the tyrant to reſign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he ſatisfied the juſt creditors of the ſtate, and unexpectedly diſcharged the long arrears of honeſt ſervices. He removed the oppreſſive reſtrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated lands in Italy and the provinces, to thoſe

[50] *Decies.* The blameleſs œconomy of Pius left his ſucceſſors a treaſure of *vicies ſepties milliès*, above two and twenty millions ſterling. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.

[51] Beſides the deſign of converting theſe uſeleſs ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1229.) aſſigns two ſecret motives of Pertinax. He wiſhed to expoſe the vices of Commodus, and to diſcover by the purchaſers thoſe who moſt reſembled him.

who

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who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute, during the term of ten years[52].

and popularity.

Such an uniform conduct had already ſecured to Pertinax the nobleſt reward of a ſovereign, the love and eſteem of his people. Thoſe who remembered the virtues of Marcus were happy to contemplate in their new emperor the features of that bright original; and flattered themſelves, that they ſhould long enjoy the benign influence of his adminiſtration. A haſty zeal to reform the corrupted ſtate, accompanied with leſs prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himſelf and to his country. His honeſt indiſcretion united againſt him the ſervile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public diſorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws[53].

Diſcontent of the Prætorians.

Amidſt the general joy, the ſullen and angry countenance of the Prætorian guards betrayed their inward diſſatisfaction. They had reluctantly ſubmitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the ſtrictneſs of the ancient diſcipline, which he was preparing to reſtore; and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their diſcontents were ſecretly fomented by Lætus their præfect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a ſervant, but would not be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign the ſoldiers ſeized on a noble ſenator, with a deſign to carry him to the camp, and to inveſt him with the Imperial purple. Inſtead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the affrighted victim eſcaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A ſhort time afterwards Soſius Falco, one of the conſuls of the year,

A conſpiracy prevented.

[52] Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct.

[53] Leges, rem ſurdam, inexorabilem eſſe. T. Liv. ii. 3.

a raſh

a raſh youth[54], but of an ancient and opulent family, liſtened to the voice of ambition; and a conſpiracy was formed during a ſhort abſence of Pertinax, which was cruſhed by his ſudden return to Rome, and his reſolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being juſtly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been ſaved by the earneſt and ſincere entreaties of the injured emperor; who conjured the ſenate, that the purity of his reign might not be ſtained by the blood even of a guilty ſenator.

Murder of Pertinax by the Prætorian. A. D. 193. March 28th.

Theſe diſappointments ſerved only to irritate the rage of the Prætorian guards. On the twenty-eighth of March, eighty-ſix days only after the death of Commodus, a general ſedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to ſuppreſs. Two or three hundred of the moſt deſperate ſoldiers marched at noon-day, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the Imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions upon guard; and by the domeſtics of the old court, who had already formed a ſecret conſpiracy againſt the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, diſdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his aſſaſſins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the ſanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they ſtood in ſilent ſuſpenſe, aſhamed of their atrocious deſign, and awed by the venerable aſpect and majeſtic firmneſs of their ſovereign, till at length the deſpair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres[55] levelled the firſt blow againſt Pertinax, who was inſtantly diſpatched

[54] If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult), Falco behaved with the moſt petulant indency to Pertinax, on the day of his acceſſion. The wiſe emperor only admoniſhed him of his youth and inexperience. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 55.

[55] The modern biſhopric of Liege. This ſoldier probably belonged to the Batavian horſe-guards, who were moſtly raiſed in the dutchy of Gueldres and the neighbourhood, and were diſtinguiſhed by their valour, and by the boldneſs with which they ſwam their horſes acroſs the broadeſt and moſt rapid rivers. Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 12. Dion, l. lv. p. 797. Lipſius de magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4.

with

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with a multitude of wounds. His head ſeparated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the Prætorian camp, in the ſight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the tranſient bleſſings of a reign, the memory of which could ſerve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes[56].

[56] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1232. Herodian, l. ii. p. 60. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 58. Victor in Epitom. & in Cæſarib. Eutropius, viii. 16.

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Public Sale of the Empire to Didius Julianus by the Prætorian Guards.—Clodius Albinus in Britain, Peſcennius Niger in Syria, and Septimius Severus in Pannonia, declare againſt the Murderers of Pertinax.—Civil Wars and Victory of Severus over his three Rivals.—Relaxation of Diſcipline.—New Maxims of Government.

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Proportion of the military force, to the number of the people.

THE power of the ſword is more ſenſibly felt in an extenſive monarchy, than in a ſmall community. It has been calculated by the ableſt politicians, that no ſtate, without being ſoon exhauſted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleneſs. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the reſt of the ſociety will vary according to the degree of its poſitive ſtrength. The advantages of military ſcience and diſcipline cannot be exerted, unleſs a proper number of ſoldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one ſoul. With a handful of men, ſuch an union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy hoſt, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike deſtroyed by the extreme minuteneſs, or the exceſſive weight, of its ſprings. To illuſtrate this obſervation we need only reflect, that there is no ſuperiority of natural ſtrength, artificial weapons, or acquired ſkill, which could enable one man to keep in conſtant ſubjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant of a ſingle town, or a ſmall diſtrict, would ſoon diſcover that an hundred armed followers were a weak defence againſt ten thouſand peaſants or citizens; but an hundred

thouſand

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thouſand well-diſciplined ſoldiers will command, with deſpotic ſway, ten millions of ſubjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thouſand guards will ſtrike terror into the moſt numerous populace that ever crowded the ſtreets of an immenſe capital.

The Prætorian guards.

The Prætorian bands, whoſe licentious fury was the firſt ſymptom and cauſe of the decline of the Roman empire, ſcarcely amounted to the laſt mentioned number [1]. They derived their inſtitution from Auguſtus. That crafty tyrant, ſenſible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his uſurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards in conſtant readineſs to protect his perſon, to awe the ſenate, and either to prevent or to cruſh the firſt motions of rebellion. He diſtinguiſhed theſe favoured troops by a double pay, and ſuperior privileges; but, as their formidable aſpect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were ſtationed in the capital; whilſt the remainder was diſperſed in the adjacent towns of Italy [2]. But after fifty years of peace and ſervitude, Tiberius ventured on a deciſive meaſure, which for ever rivetted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of relieving Italy from the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing a ſtricter diſcipline among the guards, he aſſembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp [3], which was fortified with ſkilful care [4], and placed on a commanding ſituation [5].

Their inſtitution.

Their camp.

Such formidable ſervants are always neceſſary, but often fatal to the throne of deſpotiſm. By thus introducing the Prætorian guards

Their ſtrength and confidence.

[1] They were originally nine or ten thouſand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the ſubject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increaſed them to ſixteen thouſand, and as far as we can learn from inſcriptions, they never afterwards ſunk much below that number. See Lipſius de magnitudine Romanâ, i. 4.

[2] Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 49.

[3] Tacit. Annal. iv. 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Caſſius, l. lvii. p. 867.

[4] In the civil war between Vitellius and Veſpaſian, the Prætorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines uſed in the ſiege of the beſt fortified cities. Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 84.

[5] Cloſe to the walls of the city, on the broad ſummit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antiqua, p. 46.

as it were, into the palace and the ſenate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own ſtrength, and the weakneſs of the civil government; to view the vices of their maſters with familiar contempt, and to lay aſide that reverential awe, which diſtance only, and myſtery, can preſerve, towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleneſs of an opulent city, their pride was nouriſhed by the ſenſe of their irreſiſtible weight; nor was it poſſible to conceal from them, that the perſon of the ſovereign, the authority of the ſenate, the public treaſure, and the ſeat of empire, were all in their hands. To divert the Prætorian bands from theſe dangerous reflections, the firmeſt and beſt eſtabliſhed princes were obliged to mix blandiſhments with commands, rewards with puniſhments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleaſures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchaſe their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, ſince the elevation of Claudius, was exacted as a legal claim, on the acceſſion of every new emperor [6].

Their ſpecious claims.

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to juſtify by arguments, the power which they aſſerted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the pureſt principles of the conſtitution, *their* conſent was eſſentially neceſſary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of conſuls, of generals, and of magiſtrates, however it had been recently uſurped by the ſenate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people [7]. But where was the Roman people to be found? Not ſurely amongſt the mixed multitude of ſlaves and

[6] Claudius, raiſed by the ſoldiers to the empire, was the firſt who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, 120l. (Sueton. in Claud. c. 10.): when Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Verus, took quiet poſſeſſion of the throne, he gave *vicena*, 160l. to each of the guards. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 25. (Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.) We may form ſome idea of the amount of theſe ſums, by Hadrian's complaint, that the promotion of a Cæſar had coſt him *ter millies*, two millions and a half ſterling.

[7] Cicero de Legibus, iii. 3. The firſt book of Livy, and the ſecond of Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, ſhew the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.

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ſtrangers that filled the ſtreets of Rome; a ſervile populace, as devoid of ſpirit as deſtitute of property. The defenders of the ſtate, ſelected from the flower of the Italian youth [8], and trained in the exerciſe of arms and virtue, were the genuine repreſentatives of the people, and the beſt entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. Theſe aſſertions, however defective in reaſon, became unanſwerable, when the fierce Prætorians increaſed their weight, by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their ſwords into the ſcale [9].

They offer the empire to ſale.

The Prætorians had violated the ſanctity of the throne, by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they diſhonoured the majeſty of it, by their ſubſequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the præfect Lætus, who had excited the tempeſt, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidſt the wild diſorder Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been ſent to the camp on the firſt alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was ſilenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though hiſtory has accuſtomed us to obſerve every principle and every paſſion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is ſcarcely credible that, in theſe moments of horror, Sulpicianus ſhould have aſpired to aſcend a throne polluted with the recent blood of ſo near a relation, and ſo excellent a prince. He had already begun to uſe the only effectual argument, and to treat for the Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Prætorians, apprehenſive that, in this private contract, they ſhould not obtain a juſt price for ſo valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts;

[8] They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies (Tacit. Annal. iv. 5.). The emperor Otho compliments their vanity, with the flattering titles of Italiæ Alumni, Romana vere juventus. Tacit. Hiſt. i. 84.

[9] In the ſiege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v. 48. Plutarch. in Camill. p. 143.

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and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be diſpoſed of to the beſt bidder by public auction [10].

It is purchaſed by Julian, A. D. 193. March 28th.

This infamous offer, the moſt inſolent exceſs of military licence, diffuſed an univerſal grief, ſhame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy ſenator, who, regardleſs of the public calamities, was indulging himſelf in the luxury of the table [11]. His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parаſites, eaſily convinced him that he deſerved the throne, and earneſtly conjured him to embrace ſo fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man haſtened to the Prætorian camp, where Sulpicianus was ſtill in treaty with the guards; and began to bid againſt him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negociation was tranſacted by faithful emiſſaries, who paſſed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promiſed a donative of five thouſand drachms (above one hundred and ſixty pounds) to each ſoldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, roſe at once to the ſum of ſix thouſand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds ſterling. The gates of the camp were inſtantly thrown open to the purchaſer; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the ſoldiers, who retained humanity enough to ſtipulate that he ſhould pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.

Julian is acknowledged by the ſenate.

It was now incumbent on the Prætorians to fulfil the conditions of the ſale. They placed their new ſovereign, whom they ſerved and deſpiſed, in the centre of their ranks, ſurrounded him on every ſide with their ſhields, and conducted him in cloſe order of battle through the deſerted ſtreets of the city. The ſenate was commanded

[10] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1234. Herodian, l. ii. p. 63. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 60. Though the three hiſtorians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms, that it was proclaimed as ſuch by the ſoldiers.

[11] Spartianus ſoftens the moſt odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian.

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to aſſemble; and thoſe who had been the diſtinguiſhed friends of Pertinax, or the perſonal enemies of Julian, found it neceſſary to affect a more than common ſhare of ſatisfaction at this happy revolution [12]. After Julian had filled the ſenate-houſe with armed ſoldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full aſſurance of the affections of the ſenate. The obſequious aſſembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the ſeveral branches of the Imperial power [13]. From the ſenate Julian was conducted, by the ſame military proceſſion, to take poſſeſſion of the palace. The firſt objects that ſtruck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his ſupper. The one he viewed with indifference; the other with contempt. A magnificent feaſt was prepared by his order, and he amuſed himſelf till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was obſerved, that after the crowd of flatterers diſperſed, and left him to darkneſs, ſolitude, and terrible reflection, he paſſed a ſleepleſs night; revolving moſt probably in his mind his own raſh folly, the fate of his virtuous predeceſſor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire, which had not been acquired by merit, but purchaſed by money [14].

Takes poſſeſſion of the palace.

The public diſcontent.

He had reaſon to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himſelf without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themſelves were aſhamed of the prince whom their avarice had perſuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not conſider his elevation with horror, as the laſt inſult on the Roman

[12] Dion Caſſius, at that time prætor, had been a perſonal enemy to Julian, l. lxxiii. p. 1235.

[13] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 61. We learn from thence one curious circumſtance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of Patrician families.

[14] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 61. I have endeavoured to blend into one conſiſtent ſtory the ſeeming contradictions of the two writers.

name.

name. The nobility, whoſe conſpicuous ſtation and ample poſſeſſions exacted the ſtricteſt caution, diſſembled their ſentiments, and met the affected civility of the emperor with ſmiles of complacency, and profeſſions of duty. But the people, ſecure in their numbers and obſcurity, gave a free vent to their paſſions. The ſtreets and public places of Rome reſounded with clamours and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the perſon of Julian, rejected his liberality, and conſcious of the impotence of their own reſentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to aſſert the violated majeſty of the Roman empire.

The armies of Britain, Syria, and Pannonia declare againſt Julian.

The public diſcontent was ſoon diffuſed from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whoſe company, or under whoſe command, they had ſo often fought and conquered. They received with ſurpriſe, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence, that the Prætorians had diſpoſed of the empire by public auction; and they ſternly refuſed to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal at the ſame time to the public peace; as the generals of the reſpective armies, Clodius Albinus, Peſcennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were ſtill more anxious to ſucceed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions [15], with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and however different in their characters, they were all ſoldiers of experience and capacity.

Clodius Albinus in Britain.

Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, ſurpaſſed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from ſome of the moſt illuſtrious names of the old republic [16]. But the branch from whence he claimed his deſcent, was ſunk into mean circum-

[15] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235.

[16] The Poſthumian and the Cejonian; the former of whom was raiſed to the conſulſhip in the fifth year after its inſtitution.

ſtances,

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ſtances, and tranſplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a juſt idea of his true character. Under the philoſophic cloak of auſterity, he ſtands accuſed of concealing moſt of the vices which degrade human nature [17]. But his accuſers are thoſe venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the aſhes of an unſucceſsful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preſerving with the ſon the ſame intereſt which he had acquired with the father, is a proof at leaſt that he was poſſeſſed of a very flexible diſpoſition. The favour of a tyrant does not always ſuppoſe a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find ſuch a man uſeful to his own ſervice. It does not appear that Albinus ſerved the ſon of Marcus, either as the miniſter of his cruelties, or even as the aſſociate of his pleaſures. He was employed in a diſtant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treaſonable deſigns of ſome diſcontented generals, and authorizing him to declare himſelf the guardian and ſucceſſor of the throne, by aſſuming the title and enſigns of Cæſar [18]. The governor of Britain wiſely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealouſy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at leaſt, by more ſpecious arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he aſſembled his troops; and, in an eloquent diſcourſe, deplored the inevitable miſchiefs of deſpotiſm, deſcribed the happineſs and glory which their anceſtors had enjoyed under the conſular government, and declared his firm reſolution to reinſtate the ſenate and people in their legal

[17] Spartianus, in his undigeſted collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human compoſition, and beſtows them on the ſame object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[18] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 80. 84.

authority.

authority. This popular harangue was anſwered by the loud acclamations of the Britiſh legions, and received at Rome with a ſecret murmur of applauſe. Safe in the poſſeſſion of his little world, and in the command of an army leſs diſtinguiſhed indeed for diſcipline than for numbers and valour [19], Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a ſtately ambiguous reſerve, and inſtantly declared againſt the uſurpation of Julian. The convulſions of the capital added new weight to his ſentiments, or rather to his profeſſions of patriotiſm. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Auguſtus and Emperor; and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a ſimilar occaſion, had ſtyled himſelf the Lieutenant of the ſenate and people [20].

Peſcennius Niger in Syria.

Perſonal merit alone had raiſed Peſcennius Niger from an obſcure birth and ſtation, to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which in times of civil confuſion gave him a near proſpect of the throne. Yet his parts ſeem to have been better ſuited to the ſecond than to the firſt rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himſelf an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards diſplayed the greatneſs of his mind by adopting ſeveral uſeful inſtitutions from a vanquiſhed enemy [21]. In his government, Niger acquired the eſteem of the ſoldiers, and the love of the provincials. His rigid diſcipline fortified the valour and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilſt the voluptuous Syrians were leſs delighted with the mild firmneſs of his adminiſtration, than with the affability of his manners, and the apparent pleaſure with which he attended their frequent and pompous feſtivals [22]. As ſoon as the

[19] Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead, in a mutiny of the ſoldiers. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 54. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui iraſcebantur.

[20] Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.

[21] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 76.

[22] Herod. l. ii. p. 68. The chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, ſhews the zealous attachment of his countrymen to theſe feſtivals, which at once gratified their ſuperſtition, and their love of pleaſure.

intelligence

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intelligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wiſhes of Aſia invited Niger to aſſume the Imperial purple and revenge his death. The legions of the eaſtern frontier embraced his cauſe; the opulent but unarmed provinces from the frontiers of Æthiopia [23] to the Hadriatic, cheerfully ſubmitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and ſervices. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this ſudden tide of fortune; he flattered himſelf that his acceſſion would be undiſturbed by competition, and unſtained by civil blood; and whilſt he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to ſecure the means of victory. Inſtead of entering into an effectual negociation with the powerful armies of the weſt, whoſe reſolution might decide, or at leaſt muſt balance, the mighty conteſt; inſtead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his preſence was impatiently expected [24], Niger trifled away in the luxury of Antioch thoſe irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the deciſive activity of Severus [25].

Pannonia and Dalmatia.

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the ſpace between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the laſt and moſt difficult conqueſts of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thouſand of theſe barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Auguſtus, and exerciſed the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire [26]. The Pannonians yielded at length to

[23] A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, as an ally, and, indeed, as a perſonal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I ſtrongly ſuſpect, miſtaken, he has brought to light a dynaſty of tributary princes totally unknown to hiſtory.

[24] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1238. Herod. l. ii. p. 67. A verſe in every one's mouth at that time, ſeems to expreſs the general opinion of the three rivals; Optimus eſt *Niger*, bonus *Afer*, peſſimus *Albus*. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 75.

[25] Herodian, l. ii. p. 71.

[26] See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, ii. 110, &c. who ſerved in the army of Tiberius.

the

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the arms and inſtitutions of Rome. Their recent ſubjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture, of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been obſerved, to the production of great bodies and ſlow minds[27], all contributed to preſerve ſome remains of their original ferocity, and under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were ſtill to be diſcerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhauſtible ſupply of recruits to the legions ſtationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare againſt the Germans and Sarmatians, were deſervedly eſteemed the beſt troops in the ſervice.

Septimius Severus

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual aſcent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was never diverted from its ſteady courſe by the allurements of pleaſure, the apprehenſion of danger, or the feelings of humanity[28]. On the firſt news of the murder of Pertinax, he aſſembled his troops, painted in the moſt lively colours the crime, the inſolence, and the weakneſs of the Prætorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promiſing every ſoldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchaſed the empire[29]. The acclamations of the army immediately ſaluted Severus with the names of Auguſtus, Pertinax, and Emperor; and he thus attained the lofty ſtation to which

declared emperor by the Pannonian legions. A. D. 193. April 13th.

[27] Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. ii. p. 74. Will the modern Auſtrians allow the influence?

[28] In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuſes Severus, as one of the ambitious generals who cenſured his conduct, and wiſhed to occupy his place. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 80.

[29] Pannonia was too poor to ſupply ſuch a ſum. It was probably promiſed in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the ſum, I have adopted the conjecture of Caſaubon. See Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 66. Comment. p. 115.

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he was invited, by conſcious merit and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his ſuperſtition or policy [30].

The new candidate for empire ſaw and improved the peculiar advantage of his ſituation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which gave an eaſy acceſs into Italy; and he remembered the ſaying of Auguſtus, That a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in ſight of Rome [31]. By a celerity proportioned to the greatneſs of the occaſion, he might reaſonably hope to revenge Pertinax, puniſh Julian, and receive the homage of the ſenate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, ſeparated from Italy by an immenſe tract of ſea and land, were apprized of his ſucceſs, or even of his election. During the whole expedition, he ſcarcely allowed himſelf any moments for ſleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he inſinuated himſelf into the confidence and affection of his troops, preſſed their diligence, revived their ſpirits, animated their hopes, and was well ſatisfied to ſhare the hardſhips of the meaneſt ſoldier, whilſt he kept in view the infinite ſuperiority of his reward.

Marches into Italy.

Advances towards Rome.

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himſelf prepared, to diſpute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he ſaw his inevitable ruin. The haſty arrival of every meſſenger increaſed his juſt apprehenſions. He was ſucceſſively informed, that Severus had paſſed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppoſe his progreſs, had received him with the warmeſt profeſſions of

[30] Herodian, l. ii. p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65.), or elſe at Sabaria, according to Victor. Mr. Hume, in ſuppoſing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the Imperial crown, and that he marched in Italy as general only, has not conſidered this tranſaction with his uſual accuracy (Eſſay on the original contract).

[31] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 3. We muſt reckon the march from the neareſt verge of Pannonia, and extend the ſight of the city as far as two hundred miles.

joy and duty; that the important place of Ravenna had ſurrendered without reſiſtance, and that the Hadriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty miles of Rome; and every moment diminiſhed the narrow ſpan of life and empire allotted to Julian.

Diſtreſs of Julian.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at leaſt to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the Prætorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the ſuburbs, and even ſtrengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if thoſe laſt intrenchments could be defended without hope of relief againſt a victorious invader. Fear and ſhame prevented the guards from deſerting his ſtandard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accuſtomed to vanquiſh the barbarians on the frozen Danube [32]. They quitted, with a ſigh, the pleaſures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whoſe uſe they had almoſt forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppreſſed. The unpractiſed elephants, whoſe uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would ſtrike terror into the army of the north, threw their unſkilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Miſenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilſt the ſenate enjoyed, with ſecret pleaſure, the diſtreſs and weakneſs of the uſurper [33].

His uncertain conduct.

Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He inſiſted that Severus ſhould be declared a public enemy by the ſenate. He intreated that the Pannonian general might be aſſociated to the empire. He ſent public ambaſſadors of conſular rank to ne-

[32] This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an alluſion to a real fact recorded by Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1181. It probably happened more than once.

[33] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1233. Herodian, l. ii. p. 81. There is no ſurer proof of the military ſkill of the Romans, than their firſt ſurmounting the idle terror, and afterwards diſdaining the dangerous uſe, of elephants in war.

gociate

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gociate with his rival; he diſpatched private aſſaſſins to take away his life. He deſigned that the Veſtal virgins, and all the colleges of prieſts, in their ſacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the ſacred pledges of the Roman religion, ſhould advance, in ſolemn proceſſion, to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the ſame time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appeaſe, the fates, by magic ceremonies, and unlawful ſacrifices[34].

Is deſerted by the Prætorians,

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himſelf from the only danger of ſecret conſpiracy, by the faithful attendance of ſix hundred choſen men, who never quitted his perſon or their cuiraſſes, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a ſteady and rapid courſe, he paſſed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Appennine, received into his party the troops and ambaſſadors ſent to retard his progreſs, and made a ſhort halt at Interamnia, about ſeventy miles from Rome. His victory was already ſecure; but the deſpair of the Prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of aſcending the throne without drawing the ſword[35]. His emiſſaries, diſperſed in the capital, aſſured the guards, that provided they would abandon their worthleſs prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the juſtice of the conqueror, he would no longer conſider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithleſs Prætorians, whoſe reſiſtance was ſupported only by ſullen obſtinacy, gladly complied with the eaſy conditions, ſeized the greateſt part of the aſſaſſins, and ſignified to the ſenate, that they no longer defended the cauſe of Julian. That aſſembly, convoked by the conſul, unanimouſly acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to

[34] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 62, 63.

[35] Victor and Eutropius, viii. 17. mention a combat near the Milvian bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.

Pertinax,

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and condemned and executed by order of the ſenate. A. D. 193. June 2.

Pertinax, and pronounced a ſentence of depoſition and death againſt his unfortunate ſucceſſor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchaſed, with an immenſe treaſure, an anxious and precarious reign of only ſixty-ſix days[36]. The almoſt incredible expedition of Severus, who, in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Tyber, proves at once the plenty of proviſions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodneſs of the roads, the diſcipline of the legions, and the indolent ſubdued temper of the provinces[37].

Diſgrace of the Prætorian guards.

The firſt cares of Severus were beſtowed on two meaſures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honours, due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he iſſued his commands to the Prætorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony, in which they were accuſtomed to attend their ſovereign. He was obeyed by thoſe haughty troops, whoſe contrition was the effect of their juſt terrors. A choſen part of the Illyrian army encompaſſed them with levelled ſpears. Incapable of flight or reſiſtance, they expected their fate in ſilent conſternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, ſternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, diſmiſſed them with ignominy from the truſt which they had betrayed, deſpoiled them of their ſplendid ornaments, and baniſhed them, on pain of death, to the diſtance of an hundred miles from the

[36] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1240. Herodian, l. ii. p. 83. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 63.

[37] From theſe ſixty-ſix days, we muſt firſt deduct ſixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus moſt probably elected on the 13th of April (ſee Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65. and Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 393. Note 7.). We cannot allow leſs than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march, and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermiſſion.

capital.

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capital. During the tranſaction, another detachment had been ſent to ſeize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the haſty conſequences of their deſpair[38].

Funeral and apotheoſis of Pertinax.

The funeral and conſecration of Pertinax was next ſolemnized with every circumſtance of ſad magnificence[39]. The ſenate, with a melancholy pleaſure, performed the laſt rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved, and ſtill regretted. The concern of his ſucceſſor was probably leſs ſincere. He eſteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but thoſe virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private ſtation. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with ſtudied eloquence, inward ſatisfaction, and well-acted ſorrow; and by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that *he alone* was worthy to ſupply his place. Senſible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, muſt aſſert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and, without ſuffering himſelf to be elated by this eaſy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

Succeſs of Severus againſt Niger, and againſt Albinus.

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus have induced an elegant hiſtorian to compare him with the firſt and greateſt of the Cæſars[40]. The parallel is, at leaſt, imperfect. Where ſhall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding ſuperiority of ſoul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could reconcile and unite the love of pleaſure, the thirſt of knowledge, and the fire of ambition[41]? In one inſtance only, they may be compared, with ſome degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions,

[38] Dion (l. lxxiv. p. 1241.). Herodian, l. ii. p. 84.

[39] Dion (l. lxxiv. p. 1244.), who aſſiſted at the ceremony as a ſenator, gives a moſt pompous deſcription of it.

[40] Herodian, l. iii. p. 112.

[41] Though it is not, moſt aſſuredly, the intention of Lucan, to exalt the character of Cæſar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharſalia, where he deſcribes him, at the ſame time, making love to Cleopatra, ſuſtaining a ſiege againſt the power of Egypt, and converſing with the ſages of the country, is, in reality, the nobleſt panegyric.

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A. D. 193-197.

tions, and their civil victories. In leſs than four years[42], Severus ſubdued the riches of the eaſt, and the valour of the weſt. He vanquiſhed two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and diſcipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification, and the principles of tactics, were well underſtood by all the Roman generals; and the conſtant ſuperiority of Severus was that of an artiſt, who uſes the ſame inſtruments with more ſkill and induſtry than his rivals. I ſhall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of theſe military operations; but as the two civil wars againſt Niger and againſt Albinus, were almoſt the ſame in their conduct, event, and conſequences, I ſhall collect into one point of view, the moſt ſtriking circumſtances, tending to develope the character of the conqueror, and the ſtate of the empire.

Conduct of the two civil wars. Arts of Severus

Falſehood and inſincerity, unſuitable as they ſeem to the dignity of public tranſactions, offend us with a leſs degrading idea of meanneſs, than when they are found in the intercourſe of private life. In the latter, they diſcover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power: and, as it is impoſſible for the moſt able ſtateſmen to ſubdue millions of followers and enemies by their own perſonal ſtrength, the world, under the name of policy, ſeems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and diſſimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be juſtified by the moſt ample privileges of ſtate reaſon. He promiſed only to betray, he flattered only to ruin; and however he might occaſionally bind himſelf by oaths and treaties, his conſcience, obſequious to his intereſt, always releaſed him from the inconvenient obligation[43].

towards Niger;

If his two competitors, reconciled by their common danger, had advanced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would have

[42] Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.

[43] Herodian, l. ii. p. 85.

ſunk

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ſunk under their united effort. Had they even attacked him, at the ſame time, with ſeparate views and ſeparate armies, the conteſt might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, ſingly and ſucceſſively, an eaſy prey to the arts as well as arms of their ſubtle enemy, lulled into ſecurity by the moderation of his profeſſions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He firſt marched againſt Niger, whoſe reputation and power he the moſt dreaded: but he declined any hoſtile declarations, ſuppreſſed the name of his antagoniſt, and only ſignified to the ſenate and people, his intention of regulating the eaſtern provinces. In private he ſpoke of Niger, his old friend and intended ſucceſſor[44], with the moſt affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous deſign of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To puniſh the vile uſurper of the throne, was the duty of every Roman general. To perſevere in arms, and to reſiſt a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the ſenate, would alone render him criminal[45]. The ſons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors, detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents[46]. As long as the power of Niger inſpired terror, or even reſpect, they were educated with the moſt tender care, with the children of Severus himſelf; but they were ſoon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, firſt by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compaſſion[47].

towards Albinus.

Whilſt Severus was engaged in his eaſtern war, he had reaſon to apprehend that the governor of Britain might paſs the ſea and

[44] Whilſt Severus was very dangerouſly ill, it was induſtriouſly given out, that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his ſucceſſors. As he could not be ſincere with reſpect to both, he might not be ſo with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocriſy ſo far, as to profeſs that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

[45] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65.

[46] This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very uſeful to Severus. He found, at Rome, the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or ſeduce, the parents.

[47] Herodian, l. iii. p. 56. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 67, 68.

the

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the Alps, occupy the vacant ſeat of empire, and oppoſe his return with the authority of the ſenate and the forces of the weſt. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not aſſuming the Imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting, at once, his profeſſions of patriotiſm, and the jealouſy of ſovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Cæſar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the firſt conteſt was decided, Severus treated the man, whom he had doomed to deſtruction, with every mark of eſteem and regard. Even in the letter, in which he announced his victory over Niger, he ſtyles Albinus the brother of his ſoul and empire, ſends him the affectionate ſalutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and intreats him to preſerve the armies and the republic faithful to their common intereſt. The meſſengers charged with this letter, were inſtructed to accoſt the Cæſar with reſpect, to deſire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart [48]. The conſpiracy was diſcovered, and the too credulous Albinus, at length, paſſed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal conteſt with his rival, who ruſhed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

Event of the civil wars,

The military labours of Severus ſeem inadequate to the importance of his conqueſts. Two engagements, the one near the Helleſpont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe aſſerted their uſual aſcendant over the effeminate natives of Aſia [49]. The battle of Lyons, where one hundred and fifty thouſand Romans [50] were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The valour of the Britiſh army maintained, indeed, a ſharp and doubtful conteſt, with the hardy diſcipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and perſon of

[48] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 84. Spartianus has inſerted this curious letter at full length.

[49] Conſult the third book of Herodian, and the ſeventy-fourth book of Dion Caſſius.

[50] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1260.

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Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably loſt, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops, and led them on to a deciſive victory [51]. The war was finiſhed by that memorable day.

decided by one or two battles.

The civil wars of modern Europe have been diſtinguiſhed, not only by the fierce animoſity, but likewiſe by the obſtinate perſeverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been juſtified by ſome principle, or, at leaſt, coloured by ſome pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men intereſted in the deciſion of the quarrel; and as military ſpirit and party zeal were ſtrongly diffuſed throughout the whole community, a vanquiſhed chief was immediately ſupplied with new adherents, eager to ſhed their blood in the ſame cauſe. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice of maſters. Under the ſtandard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enliſted from affection, ſome from fear, many from intereſt, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and ſtill more liberal promiſes. A defeat, by diſabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, diſſolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers; and left them to conſult their own ſafety, by a timely deſertion of an unſucceſsful cauſe. It was of little moment to the provinces, under whoſe name they were oppreſſed or governed; they were driven by the impulſion of the preſent power, and as ſoon as that power yielded to a ſuperior force, they haſtened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immenſe debt to diſcharge, was obliged to ſacrifice the moſt guilty countries to the avarice of his ſoldiers. In the vaſt extent of the

[51] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1261. Herodian, l. iii. p. 110. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 68. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 406. Note 18.

Roman

Roman empire, there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any perſon, or family, or order of men, whoſe natural intereſt, unſupported by the powers of government, was capable of reſtoring the cauſe of a ſinking party [52].

Siege of Byzantium.

Yet, in the conteſt between Niger and Severus, a ſingle city deſerves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greateſt paſſages from Europe into Aſia, it had been provided with a ſtrong garriſon, and a fleet of five hundred veſſels was anchored in the harbour [53]. The impetuoſity of Severus diſappointed this prudent ſcheme of defence; he left to his generals the ſiege of Byzantium, forced the leſs guarded paſſage of the Helleſpont, and, impatient of a meaner enemy, preſſed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increaſing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, ſuſtained a ſiege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and ſoldiers (we know not from what cauſe) were animated with equal fury; ſeveral of the principal officers of Niger, who deſpaired of, or who diſdained, a pardon, had thrown themſelves into this laſt refuge: the fortifications were eſteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer diſplayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients [54]. Byzantium, at length, ſurrendered to famine. The magiſtrates and ſoldiers were put to the ſword, the walls demoliſhed, the privileges ſuppreſſed, and the deſtined capital of the eaſt ſubſiſted only as an open village, ſubject to the inſulting juriſdiction of Perinthus. The hiſtorian Dion, who had admired the flouriſhing, and lamented the deſolate, ſtate of Byzantium, ac-

[52] Monteſquieu, Conſiderations ſur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. xii.

[53] Moſt of theſe, as may be ſuppoſed, were ſmall open veſſels; ſome, however, were gallies of two, and a few of three ranks of oars.

[54] The engineer's name was Priſcus. His ſkill ſaved his life, and he was taken into the ſervice of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the ſiege conſult Dion Caſſius (l. lxxv. p. 1251.), and Herodian (l. iii. p. 95.): for the theory of it, the fanciful chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. i. p. 76.

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cuſed the revenge of Severus, for depriving the Roman people of the ſtrongeſt bulwark againſt the barbarians of Pontus and Aſia [55]. The truth of this obſervation was but too well juſtified in the ſucceeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and paſſed through the undefended Boſphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

Deaths of Niger and Albinus. Cruel conſequences of the civil wars.

Both Niger and Albinus were diſcovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither ſurpriſe nor compaſſion. They had ſtaked their lives againſt the chance of empire, and ſuffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant ſuperiority of ſuffering his rivals to live in a private ſtation. But his unforgiving temper, ſtimulated by avarice, indulged a ſpirit of revenge, where there was no room for apprehenſion. The moſt conſiderable of the provincials, who, without any diſlike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whoſe authority they were accidentally placed, were puniſhed by death, exile, and eſpecially by the confiſcation of their eſtates. Many cities of the eaſt were ſtript of their ancient honours, and obliged to pay, into the treaſury of Severus, four times the amount of the ſums contributed by them for the ſervice of Niger [56].

Animoſity of Severus againſt the ſenate.

Till the final deciſion of the war, the cruelty of Severus was, in ſome meaſure, reſtrained by the uncertainty of the event, and his pretended reverence for the ſenate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans, that he was reſolved to ſpare none of the adherents of his unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the juſt ſuſpicion, that he had never poſſeſſed the affections of the ſenate, and he concealed his old male-

[55] Notwithſtanding the authority of Spartianus and ſome modern Greeks, we may be aſſured, from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins.

[56] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1250.

volence

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volence under the recent diſcovery of ſome treaſonable correſpondences. Thirty-five ſenators, however, accuſed of having favoured the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned; and, by his ſubſequent behaviour, endeavoured to convince them, that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their ſuppoſed offences. But, at the ſame time, he condemned forty-one[57] other ſenators, whoſe names hiſtory has recorded; their wives, children, and clients, attended them in death, and the nobleſt provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the ſame ruin. Such rigid juſtice, for ſo he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of enſuring peace to the people, or ſtability to the prince; and he condeſcended ſlightly to lament, that, to be mild, it was neceſſary that he ſhould firſt be cruel[58].

The wiſdom and juſtice of his government.

The true intereſt of an abſolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their ſecurity, are the beſt and only foundations of his real greatneſs; and were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might ſupply its place, and would dictate the ſame rule of conduct. Severus conſidered the Roman empire as his property, and had no ſooner ſecured the poſſeſſion, than he beſtowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of ſo valuable an acquiſition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmneſs, ſoon corrected moſt of the abuſes with which, ſince the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the adminiſtration of juſtice, the judgments of the emperor were characterized by attention, diſcernment, and impartiality; and whenever he deviated from the ſtrict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppreſſed; not ſo much indeed from any ſenſe of humanity, as from the natural

[57] Dion (l. lxxv. p. 1264.); only 29 ſenators are mentioned by him, but 41 are named in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 69. among whom were ſix of the name of Peſcennius. Herodian (l. iii. p. 115.) ſpeaks in general of the cruelties of Severus.

[58] Aurelius Victor.

propenſity

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propenſity of a deſpot, to humble the pride of greatneſs, and to ſink all his ſubjects to the ſame common level of abſolute dependence. His expenſive taſte for building, magnificent ſhows, and above all a conſtant and liberal diſtribution of corn and proviſions, were the ſureſt means of captivating the affection of the Roman people [59]. The misfortunes of civil diſcord were obliterated. The calm of peace and proſperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, reſtored by the munificence of Severus, aſſumed the title of his colonies, and atteſted by public monuments their gratitude and felicity [60]. The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that warlike and ſucceſsful emperor [61], and he boaſted with a juſt pride, that, having received the empire oppreſſed with foreign and domeſtic wars, he left it eſtabliſhed in profound, univerſal, and honourable peace [62].

General peace and proſperity.

Relaxation of military diſcipline.

Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poiſon ſtill lurked in the vitals of the conſtitution. Severus poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of vigour and ability; but the daring ſoul of the firſt Cæſar, or the deep policy of Auguſtus, were ſcarcely equal to the taſk of curbing the inſolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by miſguided policy, by ſeeming neceſſity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of diſcipline [63]. The vanity of his ſoldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their eaſe was indulged in the permiſſion of living with their wives in the

[59] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1272. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 67. Severus celebrated the ſecular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a proviſion of corn for ſeven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters per day. I am perſuaded, that the granaries of Severus were ſupplied for a long term, but I am not leſs perſuaded, that policy on one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents.

[60] See Spanheim's treatiſe of ancient medals, the inſcriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c. who, in Africa, Greece, and Aſia, have found more monuments of Severus, than of any other Roman emperor whatſoever.

[61] He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Cteſiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I ſhall have occaſion to mention this war in its proper place.

[62] *Etiam in Britannis*, was his own juſt and emphatic expreſſion. Hiſt. Auguſt. 73.

[63] Herodian, l. iii. p. 115. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 68.

idleneſs

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idleneſs of quarters. He increaſed their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and ſoon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occaſion of danger or feſtivity. Elated by ſucceſs, enervated by luxury, and raiſed above the level of ſubjects by their dangerous privileges [64], they ſoon became incapable of military fatigue, oppreſſive to the country, and impatient of a juſt ſubordination. Their officers aſſerted the ſuperiority of rank by a more profuſe and elegant luxury. There is ſtill extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious ſtate of the army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the neceſſary reformation from the tribunes themſelves; ſince, as he juſtly obſerves, the officer who has forfeited the eſteem, will never command the obedience, of his ſoldiers [65]. Had the emperor purſued the train of reflection, he would have diſcovered, that the primary cauſe of this general corruption might be aſcribed, not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander in chief.

New eſtabliſhment of the Prætorian guards.

The Prætorians, who murdered their emperor and ſold the empire, had received the juſt puniſhment of their treaſon; but the neceſſary, though dangerous, inſtitution of guards, was ſoon reſtored on a new model by Severus, and increaſed to four times the ancient number [66]. Formerly theſe troops had been recruited in Italy; and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the ſofter manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of theſe elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uſes of war, it was eſtabliſhed by Severus, that from all the legions of the frontiers, the ſoldiers moſt diſtinguiſhed for ſtrength, valour, and fidelity, ſhould be occaſionally

[64] Upon the inſolence and privileges of the ſoldiers, the 16th ſatire, falſely aſcribed to Juvenal, may be conſulted; the ſtyle and circumſtances of it would induce me to believe, that it was compoſed under the reign of Severus, or that of his ſon.

[65] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 73.

[66] Herodian, l. iii. p. 131.

draughted;

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draughted; and promoted, as an honour and reward, into the more eligible ſervice of the guards [67]. By this new inſtitution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exerciſe of arms, and the capital was terrified by the ſtrange aſpect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himſelf, that the legions would conſider theſe choſen Prætorians as the repreſentatives of the whole military order; and that the preſent aid of fifty thouſand men, ſuperior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field againſt them, would for ever cruſh the hopes of rebellion, and ſecure the empire to himſelf and his poſterity.

The office of Prætorian Præfect.

The command of theſe favoured and formidable troops ſoon became the firſt office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military deſpotiſm, the Prætorian Præfect, who in his origin had been a ſimple captain of the guards, was placed, not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law. In every department of adminiſtration, he repreſented the perſon, and exerciſed the authority, of the emperor. The firſt Præfect who enjoyed and abuſed this immenſe power was Plautianus, the favourite miniſter of Severus. His reign laſted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldeſt ſon of the emperor, which ſeemed to aſſure his fortune, proved the occaſion of his ruin [68]. The animoſities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who ſtill loved him, to conſent with reluctance to his death [69]. After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer,

[67] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1243.

[68] One of his moſt daring and wanton acts of power, was the caſtration of an hundred free Romans, ſome of them married men, and even fathers of families; merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an Eaſtern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1271.

[69] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1274. Herodian, l. iii. p. 122. 129. The grammarian of Alexandria ſeems, as it is not unuſual, much better acquainted with this myſterious tranſaction, and more aſſured of the guilt of Plautianus, than the Roman ſenator ventures to be.

the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of Prætorian Præfect.

The ſenate oppreſſed by military deſpotiſm.

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue and even the good ſenſe of the emperors had been diſtinguiſhed by their zeal or affected reverence for the ſenate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy inſtituted by Auguſtus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years ſpent in the deſpotiſm of military command. His haughty and inflexible ſpirit could not diſcover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preſerving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He diſdained to profeſs himſelf the ſervant of an aſſembly that deteſted his perſon and trembled at his frown; he iſſued his commands, where his requeſt would have proved as effectual; aſſumed the conduct and ſtyle of a ſovereign and a conqueror, and exerciſed, without diſguiſe, the whole legiſlative as well as the executive power.

New maxims of the Imperial prerogative.

The victory over the ſenate was eaſy and inglorious. Every eye and every paſſion were directed to the ſupreme magiſtrate, who poſſeſſed the arms and treaſure of the ſtate; whilſt the ſenate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public ſpirit, reſted its declining authority on the frail and crumbling baſis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic inſenſibly vaniſhed, and made way for the more natural and ſubſtantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were ſucceſſively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek hiſtorians of the age of the Antonines[70] obſerve, with a malicious pleaſure, that although the ſovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obſolete prejudice, abſtained from the name

[70] Appian in Proem.

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of king, he poſſeſſed the full meaſure of regal power. In the reign of Severus, the ſenate was filled with poliſhed and eloquent ſlaves from the eaſtern provinces, who juſtified perſonal flattery by ſpeculative principles of ſervitude. Theſe new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleaſure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of paſſive obedience, and deſcanted on the inevitable miſchiefs of freedom. The lawyers and the hiſtorians concurred in teaching, that the Imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commiſſion, but by the irrevocable reſignation of the ſenate; that the emperor was freed from the reſtraint of civil laws, could command by his arbitrary will the lives and fortunes of his ſubjects, and might diſpoſe of the empire as of his private patrimony [71]. The moſt eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flouriſhed under the houſe of Severus; and the Roman juriſprudence having cloſely united itſelf with the ſyſtem of monarchy, was ſuppoſed to have attained its full maturity and perfection.

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Poſterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, juſtly conſidered him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.

[71] Dion Caſſius ſeems to have written with no other view, than to form theſe opinions into an hiſtorical ſyſtem. The Pandects will ſhew how aſſiduouſly the lawyers, on their ſide, laboured in the cauſe of prerogative.

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The Death of Severus.—Tyranny of Caracalla.—Uſurpation of Macrinus.—Follies of Elagabalus.—Virtues of Alexander Severus.—Licentiouſneſs of the Army.—General State of the Roman Finances.

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Greatneſs and diſcontent of Severus.

THE aſcent to greatneſs, however ſteep and dangerous, may entertain an active ſpirit with the conſciouſneſs and exerciſe of its own powers; but the poſſeſſion of a throne could never yet afford a laſting ſatisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble ſtation, elevated him to the firſt place among mankind. "He had been all things, as he ſaid himſelf, and "all was of little value[1]." Diſtracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preſerving an empire, oppreſſed with age and infirmities, careleſs of fame[2], and ſatiated with power, all his proſpects of life were cloſed. The deſire of perpetuating the greatneſs of his family, was the only remaining wiſh of his ambition and paternal tenderneſs.

His wife the empreſs Julia.

Like moſt of the Africans, Severus was paſſionately addicted to the vain ſtudies of magic and divination, deeply verſed in the interpretation of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the ſcience of judicial aſtrology; which, in almoſt every age, except the preſent, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He

[1] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 71. "Omnia fui et nihil expedit."

[2] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvi. p. 1284.

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had loſt his firſt wife, whilſt he was governor of the Lionneſe Gaul[3]. In the choice of a ſecond, he ſought only to connect himſelf with ſome favourite of fortune; and as ſoon as he had diſcovered that a young lady of Emeſa in Syria had *a royal nativity*, he ſolicited, and obtained her hand[4]. Julia Domna (for that was her name) deſerved all that the ſtars could promiſe her. She poſſeſſed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty[5], and united to a lively imagination, a firmneſs of mind, and ſtrength of judgment, ſeldom beſtowed on her ſex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impreſſion on the dark and jealous temper of her huſband; but in her ſon's reign, ſhe adminiſtered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence, that ſupported his authority; and with a moderation, that ſometimes corrected his wild extravagancies[6]. Julia applied herſelf to letters and philoſophy, with ſome ſucceſs, and with the moſt ſplendid reputation. She was the patroneſs of every art, and the friend of every man of genius[7]. The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtues; but, if we may credit the ſcandal of ancient hiſtory, chaſtity was very far from being the moſt conſpicuous virtue of the empreſs Julia[8].

Their two ſons, Caracalla and Geta.

Two ſons, Caracalla[9] and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the deſtined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father,

[3] About the year 186, M. de Tillemont is miſerably embarraſſed with a paſſage of Dion, in which the empreſs Fauſtina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv. p. 1243.). The learned compiler forgot, that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumſcribed to no limits of time or ſpace. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *conſummated* in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389. Note 6.

[4] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65.

[5] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 85.

[6] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvii. p. 1304. 1314.

[7] See a Diſſertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philoſophis.

[8] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1235. Aurelius Victor.

[9] Baſſianus was his firſt name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign he aſſumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient hiſtorians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nick-names of Tarantus and Caracalla. The firſt was borrowed from a celebrated Gladiator, the ſecond from a long Gallic gown which he diſtributed to the people of Rome.

and

and of the Roman world, were ſoon diſappointed by theſe vain youths, who diſplayed the indolent ſecurity of hereditary princes; and a preſumption that fortune would ſupply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they diſcovered, almoſt from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other. Their averſion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their intereſted favourites, broke out in childiſh, and gradually in more ſerious, competitions; and at length divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions; actuated by the hopes and fears of their reſpective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and authority, to allay this growing animoſity. The unhappy diſcord of his ſons clouded all his proſpects, and threatened to overturn a throne raiſed with ſo much labour, cemented with ſo much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treaſure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Auguſtus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and for the firſt time the Roman world beheld three emperors[10]. Yet even this equal conduct ſerved only to inflame the conteſt, whilſt the fierce Caracalla aſſerted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the ſoldiers. In the anguiſh of a diſappointed father, Severus foretold, that the weaker of his ſons would fall a ſacrifice to the ſtronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices[11].

Their mutual averſion to each other.

Three emperors.

In theſe circumſtances the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invaſion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleaſure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been ſufficient to repel the diſtant enemy,

The Caledonian war. A. D. 208.

[10] The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198: the aſſociation of Geta to the year 208.

[11] Herodian, l. iii. p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

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he reſolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his ſons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their paſſions; and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithſtanding his advanced age (for he was above three-ſcore), and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he tranſported himſelf in perſon into that remote iſland, attended by his two ſons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately paſſed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with a deſign of completing the long attempted conqueſt of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the iſland, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuſcades of the Caledonians, who hung unſeen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldneſs of the climate, and the ſeverity of a winter march acroſs the hills and moraſſes of Scotland, are reported to have coſt the Romans above fifty thouſand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obſtinate attack, ſued for peace, and ſurrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But their apparent ſubmiſſion laſted no longer than the preſent terror. As ſoon as the Roman legions had retired, they reſumed their hoſtile independence. Their reſtleſs ſpirit provoked Severus to ſend a new army into Caledonia, with the moſt bloody orders, not to ſubdue but to extirpate the natives. They were ſaved by the death of their haughty enemy[12].

Fingal and his heroes.

This Caledonian war, neither marked by deciſive events, nor attended with any important conſequences, would ill deſerve our attention; but it is ſuppoſed, not without a conſiderable degree of probability, that the invaſion of Severus is connected with the moſt ſhining period of the Britiſh hiſtory or fable. Fingal, whoſe fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is ſaid to have commanded the Caledonians in

[12] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. iii. p. 132, &c.

that

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that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a ſignal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the ſon of *the King of the World*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride[13]. Something of a doubtful miſt ſtill hangs over theſe Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely diſpelled by the moſt ingenious reſearches of modern criticiſm[14]: but if we could, with ſafety, indulge the pleaſing ſuppoſition, that Fingal lived, and that Oſſian ſung, the ſtriking contraſt of the ſituation and manners of the contending nations might amuſe a philoſophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla, with the bravery, the tenderneſs, the elegant genius of Oſſian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or intereſt, ſerved under the Imperial ſtandard, with the freeborn warriors who ſtarted to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and ſlavery.

Contraſt of the Caledonians and the Romans.

The declining health and laſt illneſs of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black paſſions of Caracalla's ſoul. Impatient of any delay or diviſion of empire, he attempted, more than once, to ſhorten the ſmall remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without ſucceſs, to excite a mutiny among the troops[15]. The

Ambition of Caracalla.

[13] Oſſian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.

[14] That the Caracul of Oſſian is the Caracalla of the Roman Hiſtory, is, perhaps, the only point of Britiſh antiquity in which Mr. Macpherſon and Mr. Whitaker are of the ſame opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the ſon of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus; and it may ſeem ſtrange, that the Highland bard ſhould deſcribe him by a nick-name, invented four years afterwards, ſcarcely uſed by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and ſeldom employed by the moſt ancient hiſtorians See Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1317. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89. Aurel. Victor. Euſeb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.

[15] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1282. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 71. Aurel. Victor.

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old emperor had often cenſured the miſguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a ſingle act of juſtice, might have ſaved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthleſs ſon. Placed in the ſame ſituation, he experienced how eaſily the rigour of a judge diſſolves away in the tenderneſs of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not puniſh; and this laſt and only inſtance of mercy, was more fatal to the empire than a long ſeries of cruelty[16]. The diſorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wiſhed impatiently for death, and haſtened the inſtant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in the ſixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and ſucceſsful reign. In his laſt moments he recommended concord to his ſons, and his ſons to the army. The ſalutary advice never reached the heart, or even the underſtanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceaſed maſter, reſiſted the ſolicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes ſoon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful ſovereigns, by the ſenate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank ſeems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both adminiſtered the empire with equal and independent power[17].

Death of Severus, and acceſſion of his two ſons. A. D. 211. 4th February.

Such a divided form of government would have proved a ſource of diſcord between the moſt affectionate brothers. It was impoſſible that it could long ſubſiſt between two implacable enemies, who neither deſired nor could truſt a reconciliation. It was viſible that one only could reign, and that the other muſt fall; and each of them judging of his rival's deſigns by his own, guarded his life with the

Jealouſy and hatred of the two emperors.

[16] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1283. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89.

[17] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Herodian, l. iii. p. 135.

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moſt jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poiſon or the ſword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy, during which they never eat at the ſame table, or ſlept in the ſame houſe, diſplayed to the provinces the odious ſpectacle of fraternal diſcord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vaſt extent of the Imperial palace [18]. No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and paſſages were diligently fortified, and guards poſted and relieved with the ſame ſtrictneſs as in a beſieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the preſence of their afflicted mother; and each ſurrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on theſe occaſions of ceremony, the diſſimulation of courts could ill diſguiſe the rancour of their hearts [19].

Fruitleſs negociation for dividing the empire between them.

This latent civil war already diſtracted the whole government, when a ſcheme was ſuggeſted that ſeemed of mutual benefit to the hoſtile brothers. It was propoſed, that ſince it was impoſſible to reconcile their minds, they ſhould ſeparate their intereſt, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with ſome accuracy. It was agreed, that Caracalla, as the elder brother, ſhould remain in poſſeſſion of Europe and the weſtern

[18] Mr. Hume is juſtly ſurpriſed at a paſſage of Herodian (l. iv. p. 139.), who, on this occaſion, repreſents the Imperial palace, as equal in extent to the reſt of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount on which it was built, occupied, at moſt, a circumference of eleven or twelve thouſand feet (See the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica). But we ſhould recollect that the opulent ſenators had almoſt ſurrounded the city with their extenſive gardens and ſuburb palaces, the greateſt part of which had been gradually confiſcated by the emperors. If Geta reſided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum; and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Eſqueline, the rival brothers were ſeparated from each other by the diſtance of ſeveral miles; and yet the intermediate ſpace was filled by the Imperial gardens of Salluſt, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c. all ſkirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the ſtreets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deſerves, a particular diſſertation, illuſtrated by a map of ancient Rome.

[19] Herodian, l. iv. p. 139.

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Africa; and that he ſhould relinquiſh the ſovereignty of Aſia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his reſidence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itſelf in wealth and greatneſs; that numerous armies ſhould be conſtantly encamped on either ſide of the Thracian Boſphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the ſenators of European extraction ſhould acknowledge the ſovereign of Rome, whilſt the natives of Aſia followed the emperor of the Eaſt. The tears of the empreſs Julia interrupted the negociation, the firſt idea of which had filled every Roman breaſt with ſurpriſe and indignation. The mighty maſs of conqueſt was ſo intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the moſt forcible violence to rend it aſunder. The Romans had reaſon to dread, that the disjointed members would ſoon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one maſter; but if the ſeparation was permanent, the diviſion of the provinces muſt terminate in the diſſolution of an empire whoſe unity had hitherto remained inviolate [20].

Murder of Geta. A D. 212. 27th February.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the ſovereign of Europe might ſoon have been the conqueror of Aſia; but Caracalla obtained an eaſier though a more guilty victory. He artfully liſtened to his mother's entreaties, and conſented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midſt of their converſation, ſome centurions who had contrived to conceal themſelves, ruſhed with drawn ſwords upon the unfortunate Geta. His diſtracted mother ſtrove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing ſtruggle, ſhe was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger ſon, while ſhe ſaw the elder animating and aſſiſting [21] the fury of the aſſaſſins. As ſoon as the deed was perpetrated,

[20] Herodian, l. iv. p. 144.

[21] Caracalla conſecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the ſword, with which, as he boaſted, he had ſlain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

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petrated, Caracalla, with haſty ſteps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Prætorian camp as his only refuge, and threw himſelf on the ground before the ſtatues of the tutelar deities [22]. The ſoldiers attempted to raiſe and comfort him. In broken and diſordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate eſcape; inſinuating that he had prevented the deſigns of his enemy, and declared his reſolution to live and die with his faithful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the ſoldiers; but complaint was uſeleſs, revenge was dangerous, and they ſtill reverenced the ſon of Severus. Their diſcontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla ſoon convinced them of the juſtice of his cauſe, by diſtributing in one laviſh donative the accumulated treaſures of his father's reign [23]. The real *ſentiments* of the ſoldiers alone were of importance to his power or ſafety. Their declaration in his favour, commanded the dutiful *profeſſions* of the ſenate. The obſequious aſſembly was always prepared to ratify the deciſion of fortune; but as Caracalla wiſhed to aſſuage the firſt emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor [24]. Poſterity, in pity to his misfortune, has caſt a veil over his vices. We conſider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himſelf wanted power, rather than inclination, to conſummate the ſame attempts of revenge and murder.

Remorſe and cruelty of Caracalla.

The crime went not unpuniſhed. Neither buſineſs, nor pleaſure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the ſtings of a guilty con-

[22] Herodian, l. iv. p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a ſmall chapel near the head-quarters, in which the ſtatues of the tutelar deities were preſerved and adored; and we may remark, that the eagles, and other military enſigns, were in the firſt rank of theſe deities: an excellent inſtitution, which confirmed diſcipline by the ſanction of religion. See Lipſius de Militia Romana, iv. 5. v. 2.

[23] Herodian, l. iv. p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1289.

[24] Geta was placed among the gods. Sit *divus*, dum non ſit *vivus*, ſaid his brother. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 91. Some marks of Geta's conſecration are ſtill found upon medals.

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ſcience; and he confeſſed, in the anguiſh of a tortured mind, that his diſordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother riſing into life, to threaten and upbraid him [25]. The conſciouſneſs of his crime ſhould have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal neceſſity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recal the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the ſenate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of ſeveral noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger ſon. The jealous emperor threatened them with inſtant death; the ſentence was executed againſt Fadilla, the laſt remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to ſilence her lamentations, to ſuppreſs her ſighs, and to receive the aſſaſſin with ſmiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thouſand perſons of both ſexes ſuffered death. His guards and freedmen, the miniſters of his ſerious buſineſs, and the companions of his looſer hours, thoſe who by his intereſt had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependants, were included in the proſcription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the ſmalleſt correſpondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name [26]. Helvius Pertinax, ſon to the prince of that name, loſt his life by an unſeaſonable witticiſm [27]. It was a ſufficient crime of Thraſea Priſcus, to

[25] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

[26] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1290. Herodian, l. iv. p. 150. Dion (p. 1298.) ſays, that the comic poets no longer durſt employ the name of Geta in their plays, and that the eſtates of thoſe who mentioned it in their teſtaments, were confiſcated.

[27] Caracalla had aſſumed the names of ſeveral conquered nations; Pertinax obſerved, that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained ſome advantage of the Goths or Getæ) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89.

be

be deſcended from a family in which the love of liberty ſeemed an hereditary quality [28]. The particular cauſes of calumny and ſuſpicion were at length exhauſted; and when a ſenator was accuſed of being a ſecret enemy to the government, the emperor was ſatisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the moſt bloody inferences.

Death of Papinian.

The execution of ſo many innocent citizens was bewailed by the ſecret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Prætorian præfect, was lamented as a public calamity. During the laſt ſeven years of Severus, he had exerciſed the moſt important offices of the ſtate, and, by his ſalutary influence, guided the emperor's ſteps in the paths of juſtice and moderation. In full aſſurance of his virtue and abilities, Severus, on his death-bed, had conjured him to watch over the proſperity and union of the Imperial family [29]. The honeſt labours of Papinian ſerved only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived againſt his father's miniſter. After the murder of Geta, the Præfect was commanded to exert the powers of his ſkill and eloquence in a ſtudied apology for that atrocious deed. The philoſophic Seneca had condeſcended to compoſe a ſimilar epiſtle to the ſenate, in the name of the ſon and aſſaſſin of Agrippina [30]; "That it was eaſier to commit than to juſtify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian [31], who did not heſitate between the loſs of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had eſcaped pure and unſullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits of buſineſs, and the arts of his profeſſion, reflects more luſtre on the memory of Papinian, than all his great employments, his

[28] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1291. He was probably deſcended from Helvidius Priſcus, and Thraſea Pætus, thoſe patriots whoſe firm, but uſeleſs and unſeaſonable virtue, has been immortalized by Tacitus.

[29] It is ſaid that Papinian was himſelf a relation of the empreſs Julia.

[30] Tacit. Annal. xiv. ii.

[31] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 88.

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numerous writings, and the ſuperior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preſerved through every age of the Roman juriſprudence [32].

His tyranny extended over the whole empire.

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worſt of times their conſolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Auguſtus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, viſited their extenſive dominions in perſon, and their progreſs was marked by acts of wiſdom and beneficence. The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who reſided almoſt conſtantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the ſenatorial and equeſtrian orders [33]. But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The reſt of his reign was ſpent in the ſeveral provinces of the empire, particularly thoſe of the Eaſt, and every province was by turns the ſcene of his rapine and cruelty. The ſenators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immenſe expence, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either diſdained to viſit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The moſt wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiſcations, and the great body of his ſubjects oppreſſed by ingenious and aggravated taxes [34]. In the midſt of peace, and upon the ſlighteſt provocation, he iſſued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general maſſacre. From a ſecure poſt in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the ſlaughter of many thouſand citizens, as well as ſtrangers, without diſtinguiſhing either the number or the crime of the ſufferers; ſince, as he coolly informed the

A. D. 213.

[32] With regard to Papinian, ſee Heineccius's Hiſtoria Juris Romani, l. 330, &c.

[33] Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a ſhort journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum Principum uſus ex æquo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 75.

[34] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1294.

ſenate, *all* the Alexandrians, thoſe who had periſhed and thoſe who had eſcaped, were alike guilty [35].

Relaxation of diſcipline.

The wiſe inſtructions of Severus never made any laſting impreſſion on the mind of his ſon, who, although not deſtitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity [36]. One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abuſed by Caracalla, "To ſecure the affections of the "army, and to eſteem the reſt of his ſubjects as of little moment [37]." But the liberality of the father had been reſtrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmneſs and authority. The careleſs profuſion of the ſon was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the ſoldiers, inſtead of being confirmed by the ſevere diſcipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The exceſſive increaſe of their pay and donatives [38] exhauſted the ſtate to enrich the military order, whoſe modeſty in peace, and ſervice in war, is beſt ſecured by an honourable poverty. The demeanor of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their inſo-

[35] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307. Herodian, l. iv. p. 158. The former repreſents it as a cruel maſſacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It ſeems probable, that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults.

[36] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1296.

[37] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hiſt. of Rome, p. 330.) ſuſpects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himſelf, and attributed to his father.

[38] Dion (l. lxxviii. p. 1343.) informs us, that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to ſeventy millions of drachmæ (about two millions three hundred and fifty thouſand pounds) There is another paſſage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious; were it not obſcure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The beſt ſenſe ſeems to be, that the Prætorian guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (forty pounds) a year (Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.). Under the reign of Auguſtus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Tacit. Annal. i. 17.). Domitian, who increaſed the ſoldiers pay one fourth, muſt have raiſed the Prætorians to 960 drachmæ (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. iii. c. 2.). Theſe ſucceſſive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the ſoldiers pay, their numbers too were increaſed. We have ſeen the Prætorians alone increaſed from 10,000 to 50,000 men.

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lent familiarity, and, neglecting the eſſential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dreſs and manners of a common ſoldier.

Murder of Caracalla. A. D. 217. 8th March.

It was impoſſible that ſuch a character, and ſuch a conduct as that of Caracalla, could inſpire either love or eſteem; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was ſecure from the danger of rebellion. A ſecret conſpiracy, provoked by his own jealouſy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Prætorian præfecture was divided between two miniſters. The military department was intruſted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able ſoldier; and the civil affairs were tranſacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in buſineſs, had raiſed himſelf, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion, or the moſt caſual circumſtance. Malice or fanaticiſm had ſuggeſted to an African, deeply ſkilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his ſon were deſtined to reign over the empire. The report was ſoon diffuſed through the province; and when the man was ſent in chains to Rome, he ſtill aſſerted, in the preſence of the Præfect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magiſtrate, who had received the moſt preſſing inſtructions to inform himſelf of the *ſucceſſors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at that time reſided in Syria. But, notwithſtanding the diligence of the public meſſengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprize him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the Prætorian Præfect, directing him to diſpatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important buſineſs that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and reſolved to prevent it. He inflamed the diſcontents of ſome inferior officers, and employed the hand

hand of Martialis, a deſperate ſoldier, who had been refuſed the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edeſſa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhæ. He was attended by a body of cavalry; but having ſtopped on the road for ſome neceſſary occaſion, his guards preſerved a reſpectful diſtance, and Martialis approaching his perſon under a pretence of duty, ſtabbed him with a dagger. The bold aſſaſſin was inſtantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monſter whoſe life diſgraced human nature, and whoſe reign accuſed the patience of the Romans[39]. The grateful ſoldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the ſenate to proſtitute their own dignity and that of religion by granting him a place among the gods. Whilſt he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He aſſumed the name and enſigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, perſecuted the diſciples of Ariſtotle, and diſplayed with a puerile enthuſiaſm the only ſentiment by which he diſcovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can eaſily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conqueſt of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he ſtill wanted the more elegant accompliſhments of the ſon of Philip) might boaſt of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity: but in no one action of his life did Caracalla expreſs the faineſt reſemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends[40].

Imitation of Alexander.

After the extinction of the houſe of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a maſter. The choice of the army (for

Election and character of Macrinus.

[39] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1312. Herodian, l. iv. p. 168.

[40] The fondneſs of Caracalla for the name and enſigns of Alexander, is ſtill preſerved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Uſu Numiſmatum, Diſſertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. p. 154.) had ſeen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one ſide of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.

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the authority of a diſtant and feeble ſenate was little regarded) hung in anxious ſuſpenſe; as no candidate preſented himſelf whoſe diſtinguiſhed birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their ſuffrages. The deciſive weight of the Prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their præfects, and theſe powerful miniſters began to aſſert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the ſenior præfect, conſcious of his age and infirmities, of his ſmall reputation, and his ſmaller abilities, reſigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whoſe well-diſſembled grief removed all ſuſpicion of his being acceſſary to his maſter's death[41]. The troops neither loved nor eſteemed his character. They caſt their eyes around in ſearch of a competitor, and at laſt yielded with reluctance to his promiſes of unbounded liberality and indulgence. A ſhort time after his acceſſion, he conferred on his ſon Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, aſſiſted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furniſhed a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and ſecure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

A. D. 217. March 11.

Diſcontent of the ſenate,

The authority of the new ſovereign had been ratified by the cheerful ſubmiſſion of the ſenate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it ſeemed of little conſequence to examine into the virtues of the ſucceſſor of Caracalla. But as ſoon as the firſt tranſports of joy and ſurpriſe had ſubſided, they began to ſcrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical ſeverity, and to arraign the haſty choice of the army. It had hitherto been conſidered as a fundamental maxim of the conſtitution, that the emperor muſt be always choſen in the ſenate, and the ſovereign power, no longer exerciſed by the whole body, was always delegated

[41] Herodian, l. iv. p. 169. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 94.

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to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a ſenator[42]. The ſudden elevation of the Prætorian præfects betrayed the meanneſs of their origin; and the equeſtrian order was ſtill in poſſeſſion of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary ſway the lives and fortunes of the ſenate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man whoſe obſcure[43] extraction had never been illuſtrated by any ſignal ſervice, ſhould dare to inveſt himſelf with the purple, inſtead of beſtowing it on ſome diſtinguiſhed ſenator, equal in birth and dignity to the ſplendour of the Imperial ſtation. As ſoon as the character of Macrinus was ſurveyed by the ſharp eye of diſcontent, ſome vices, and many defects, were eaſily diſcovered. The choice of his miniſters was in many inſtances juſtly cenſured, and the diſſatisfied people, with their uſual candour, accuſed at once his indolent tameneſs and his exceſſive ſeverity[44].

His raſh ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to ſtand with firmneſs, and impoſſible to fall without inſtant deſtruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil buſineſs, he trembled in the preſence of the fierce and undiſciplined multitude, over whom he had aſſumed the command; his military talents were deſpiſed, and his perſonal courage ſuſpected; a whiſper that circulated in the camp, diſcloſed the fatal ſecret of the conſpiracy againſt

and the army.

[42] Dion, l. lxxxviii. p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predeceſſor, with daring to ſeat himſelf on the throne; though, as Prætorian Præfect, he could not have been admitted into the ſenate after the voice of the cryer had cleared the houſe. The perſonal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the eſtabliſhed rule. They roſe indeed from the equeſtrian order; but they preſerved the præfecture with the rank of ſenator, and even with the conſulſhip.

[43] He was a native of Cæſarea, in Numidia, and began his fortune by ſerving in the houſehold of Plautian, from whoſe ruin he narrowly eſcaped. His enemies aſſerted, that he was born a ſlave, and had exerciſed, among other infamous profeſſions, that of Gladiator. The faſhion of aſperſing the birth and condition of an adverſary, ſeems to have laſted from the time of the Greek orators, to the learned grammarians of the laſt age.

[44] Both Dion and Herodian ſpeak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus, with candour and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, ſeems to have implicitly copied ſome of the venal writers, employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predeceſſor.

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the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baſeneſs of hypocriſy, and heightened contempt by deteſtation. To alienate the ſoldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting: and ſuch was the peculiar hardſhip of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exerciſe that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and diſorder; and if that worthleſs tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the ſure conſequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark proſpect of the diſtreſs and calamities which he bequeathed to his ſucceſſors.

Macrinus attempts a reformation of the army.

In the management of this neceſſary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence, which would have reſtored health and vigour to the Roman army, in an eaſy and almoſt imperceptible manner. To the ſoldiers already engaged in the ſervice, he was conſtrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate though liberal eſtabliſhment of Severus, and gradually formed to modeſty and obedience [45]. One fatal error deſtroyed the ſalutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army, aſſembled in the Eaſt by the late emperor, inſtead of being immediately diſperſed by Macrinus through the ſeveral provinces, was ſuffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleneſs of their quarters, the troops viewed their ſtrength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, inſtead of being flattered by the advantageous diſtinction, were alarmed by the firſt ſteps of the emperor, which they conſidered as the preſage of his future intentions. The recruits,

[45] Dion, l. lxxxiii. p. 1336. The ſenſe of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but M. Wotton has miſtaken both, by underſtanding the diſtinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. Hiſtory of Rome, p. 347.

with

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with ſullen reluctance, entered on a ſervice, whoſe labours were increaſed while its rewards were diminiſhed by a covetous and unwarlike ſovereign. The murmurs of the army ſwelled with impunity into ſeditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a ſpirit of diſcontent and diſaffection, that waited only for the ſlighteſt occaſion to break out on every ſide into a general rebellion. To minds thus diſpoſed, the occaſion ſoon preſented itſelf.

Death of the empreſs Julia. Education, pretenſions, and revolt of Elagabalus, called at firſt Baſſianus and Antoninus.

The empreſs Julia had experienced all the viciſſitudes of fortune. From an humble ſtation ſhe had been raiſed to greatneſs, only to taſte the ſuperior bitterneſs of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her ſons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good ſenſe muſt have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empreſs. Notwithſtanding the reſpectful civility expreſſed by the uſurper towards the widow of Severus, ſhe deſcended with a painful ſtruggle into the condition of a ſubject, and ſoon withdrew herſelf by a voluntary death from the anxious and humiliating dependence [46]. Julia Mæſa, her ſiſter, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emeſa with an immenſe fortune, the fruit of twenty years favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of whom was a widow, and each had an only ſon. Baſſianus, for that was the name of the ſon of Soæmias, was conſecrated to the honourable miniſtry of high prieſt of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or ſuperſtition, contributed to raiſe the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was ſtationed at Emeſa; and, as the ſevere diſcipline of Macrinus had conſtrained them to paſs the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of ſuch unaccuſtomed hardſhips. The ſoldiers, who reſorted

[45] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though leſs particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

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in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dreſs and figure of a young pontiff: they recogniſed, or they thought that they recogniſed, the features of Caracalla, whoſe memory they now adored. The artful Mæſa ſaw and cheriſhed their riſing partiality, and readily ſacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandſon, ſhe inſinuated that Baſſianus was the natural ſon of their murdered ſovereign. The ſums diſtributed by her emiſſaries with a laviſh hand, ſilenced every objection, and the profuſion ſufficiently proved the affinity, or at leaſt the reſemblance, of Baſſianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had aſſumed and polluted that reſpectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emeſa, aſſerted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the ſtandard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge his father's death and the oppreſſion of the military order[47].

A. D. 218. May 16.

Defeat and death of Macrinus.

Whilſt a conſpiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a deciſive motion, might have cruſhed his infant enemy, floated between the oppoſite extremes of terror and ſecurity, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A ſpirit of rebellion diffuſed itſelf through all the camps and garriſons of Syria, ſucceſſive detachments murdered their officers[48], and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy reſtitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakneſs of Macrinus. At length he marched out

[47] According to Lampridius (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 135.), Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and ſeven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was conſequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder couſin might be about ſeventeen. This computation ſuits much better the hiſtory of the young princes, than that of Herodian (l. v. p. 181.), who repreſents them as three years younger; whilſt, by an oppoſite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conſpiracy, ſee Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1339. Herodian, l. v. p. 184.

[48] By a moſt dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every ſoldier who brought in his officer's head, became entitled to his private eſtate, as well as to his military commiſſion.

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of Antioch, to meet the increaſing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops ſeemed to take the field with faintneſs and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle[49], the Prætorian guards, almoſt by an involuntary impulſe, aſſerted the ſuperiority of their valour and diſcipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eaſtern cuſtom, had attended the army, threw themſelves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compaſſion of the ſoldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himſelf, who, in the reſt of his life, never acted like a man, in this important criſis of his fate approved himſelf a hero, mounted his horſe, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged ſword in hand among the thickeſt of the enemy; whilſt the eunuch Gannys, whoſe occupations had been confined to female cares and the ſoft luxury of Aſia, diſplayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle ſtill raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cauſe by a ſhameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice ſerved only to protract his life a few days, and to ſtamp deſerved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to add, that his ſon Diadumenianus was involved in the ſame fate. As ſoon as the ſtubborn Prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had baſely deſerted them, they ſurrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army mingling tears of joy and tenderneſs, united under the banners of the imagined ſon of Caracalla, and the Eaſt acknowledged with pleaſure the firſt emperor of Aſiatic extraction.

A. D. 218. 7th June.

The letters of Macrinus had condeſcended to inform the ſenate of the ſlight diſturbance occaſioned by an impoſtor in Syria, and a de-

Elagabalus writes to the ſenate.

[49] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1345. Herodian, l. v. p. 186. The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two and twenty miles from Antioch.

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cree immediately paſſed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promiſe of pardon, however, to ſuch of his deluded adherents as ſhould merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapſed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in ſo ſhort an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more eſpecially thoſe of the Eaſt, were diſtracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and ſtained with a uſeleſs effuſion of civil blood, ſince whoſoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria, muſt reign over the empire. The ſpecious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient ſenate, were filled with profeſſions of virtue and moderation; the ſhining examples of Marcus and Auguſtus, he ſhould ever conſider as the great rule of his adminiſtration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the ſtriking reſemblance of his own age and fortunes with thoſe of Auguſtus, who in the earlieſt youth had revenged by a ſucceſsful war the murder of his father. By adopting the ſtyle of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, ſon of Antoninus and grandſon of Severus, he tacitly aſſerted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by aſſuming the tribunitian and proconſular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the ſenate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the conſtitution was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce diſdain of his military followers[50].

Picture of Elagabalus. A. D. 219.

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the moſt trifling amuſements, he waſted many months in his luxurious progreſs from Syria to Italy, paſſed at Nicomedia his firſt winter after his victory, and deferred till the enſuing ſummer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in

[50] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1353.

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the ſenate-houſe, conveyed to the Romans the juſt but unworthy reſemblance of his perſon and manners. He was drawn in his ſacerdotal robes of ſilk and gold, after the looſe flowing faſhion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an ineſtimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white[51]. The grave ſenators confeſſed with a ſigh, that, after having long experienced the ſtern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental deſpotiſm.

His ſuperſtition.

The Sun was worſhipped at Emeſa, under the name of Elagabalus[52], and under the form of a black conical ſtone, which, as it was univerſally believed, had fallen from heaven on that ſacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without ſome reaſon, aſcribed his elevation to the throne. The diſplay of ſuperſtitious gratitude, was the only ſerious buſineſs of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emeſa over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity: and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he preſumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that ſacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatneſs. In a ſolemn proceſſion through the ſtreets of Rome, the way was ſtrewed with gold duſt; the black ſtone, ſet in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by ſix milk-white horſes richly capariſoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, ſupported by his miniſters, moved ſlowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine preſence. In a magnificent temple raiſed on the Palatine Mount, the ſacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumſtance of coſt and ſolemnity. The richeſt

[51] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363. Herodian, l. v. p. 189.

[52] This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *Ela* a God, and *Gabal* to form, the forming, or plaſtic God, a proper, and even happy epithet for the Sun. Wotton's Hiſtory of Rome, p. 378.

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wines, the moſt extraordinary victims, and the rareſt aromatics, were profuſely conſumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damſels performed their laſcivious dances to the ſound of barbarian muſic, whilſt the graveſt perſonages of the ſtate and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meaneſt functions, with affected zeal and ſecret indignation[53].

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worſhip, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium[54], and all the ſacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferior deities attended in various ſtations the majeſty of the god of Emeſa; but his court was ſtill imperfect, till a female of diſtinguiſhed rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been firſt choſen for his conſort; but as it was dreaded leſt her warlike terrors might affright the ſoft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adored by the Africans under the name of Aſtarte, was deemed a more ſuitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was tranſported with ſolemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of theſe myſtic nuptials was a general feſtival in the capital and throughout the empire[55].

His profligate and effeminate luxury.

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable reſpect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of ſenſe by ſocial intercourſe, endearing connections, and the ſoft colouring of taſte and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I ſpeak of the emperor of that name), corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himſelf to the groſſeſt pleaſures with ungoverned fury, and ſoon found diſguſt and ſatiety in the midſt of his enjoyments.

[53] Herodian, l. v. p. 190.

[54] He broke into the ſanctuary of Veſta, and carried away a ſtatue, which he ſuppoſed to be the Palladium; but the veſtals boaſted, that, by a pious fraud, they had impoſed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 103.

[55] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1360. Herodian, l. v. p. 193. The ſubjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal preſents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promiſed during the life of Elagabalus, was carefully exacted under the adminiſtration of Mamæa.

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The inflammatory powers of art were ſummoned to his aid: the confuſed multitude of women, of wines, and of diſhes, and the ſtudied variety of attitudes and ſauces, ſerved to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in theſe ſciences, the only ones cultivated and patroniſed by the monarch[56], ſignalized his reign, and tranſmitted his infamy to ſucceeding times. A capricious prodigality ſupplied the want of taſte and elegance; and whilſt Elagabalus laviſhed away the treaſures of his people in the wildeſt extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a ſpirit and magnificence unknown to the tameneſs of his predeceſſors. To confound the order of ſeaſons and climates[57], to ſport with the paſſions and prejudices of his ſubjects, and to ſubvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his moſt delicious amuſements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid ſucceſſion of wives, among whom was a veſtal virgin, raviſhed by force from her ſacred aſylum[58], were inſufficient to ſatisfy the impotence of his paſſions. The maſter of the Roman world affected to copy the dreſs and manners of the female ſex, preferred the diſtaff to the ſceptre, and diſhonoured the principal dignities of the empire by diſtributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly inveſted with the title and authority of the emperor's, or, as he more properly ſtyled himſelf, of the empreſs's huſband[59].

[56] The invention of a new ſauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not reliſhed, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing elſe, till he had diſcovered another more agreeable to the Imperial palate. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 111.

[57] He never would eat ſea-fiſh except at a great diſtance from the ſea; he then would diſtribute vaſt quantities of the rareſt ſorts, brought at an immenſe expence, to the peaſants of the inland country. Hiſt. Aug. p. 109.

[58] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1358. Herodian, l. v. p. 192.

[59] Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been ſupplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made præfect of the city, a charioteer præfect of the watch, a barber præfect of the proviſions. Theſe three miniſters, with many inferior officers, were all recommended, *enormitate membrorum*. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 105.

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Contempt of decency which diſtinguiſhed the Roman tyrants.

It may ſeem probable, the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice[60]. Yet confining ourſelves to the public ſcenes diſplayed before the Roman people, and atteſted by grave and contemporary hiſtorians, their inexpreſſible infamy ſurpaſſes that of any other age or country. The licence of an eaſtern monarch is ſecluded from the eye of curioſity by the inacceſſible walls of his ſeraglio. The ſentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleaſure, a regard for decency, and a reſpect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careleſs of cenſure, they lived without reſtraint in the patient and humble ſociety of their ſlaves and paraſites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his ſubjects with the ſame contemptuous indifference, aſſerted without control his ſovereign privilege of luſt and luxury.

Diſcontents of the army.

The moſt worthleſs of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the ſame diſorders which they allow in themſelves; and can readily diſcover ſome nice difference of age, character, or ſtation, to juſtify the partial diſtinction. The licentious ſoldiers, who had raiſed to the throne the diſſolute ſon of Caracalla, bluſhed at their ignominious choice, and turned with diſguſt from that monſter, to contemplate with pleaſure the opening virtues of his couſin Alexander the ſon of Mamæa. The crafty Mæſa, ſenſible that her grandſon Elagabalus muſt inevitably deſtroy himſelf by his own vices, had provided another and ſurer ſupport of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondneſs and devotion, ſhe had perſuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to inveſt him with the title of Cæſar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer

Alexander Severus declared Cæſar. A. D. 221.

[60] Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory (p. 111.), is inclined to ſuſpect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

interrupted

interrupted by the care of the earth. In the ſecond rank that amiable prince ſoon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealouſy, who reſolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival. His arts proved unſucceſsful; his vain deſigns were conſtantly diſcovered by his own loquacious folly, and diſappointed by thoſe virtuous and faithful ſervants whom the prudence of Mamæa had placed about the perſon of her ſon. In a haſty ſally of paſſion, Elagabalus reſolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compaſs by fraud, and by a deſpotic ſentence degraded his couſin from the rank and honours of Cæſar. The meſſage was received in the ſenate with ſilence, and in the camp with fury. The Prætorian guards ſwore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the diſhonoured majeſty of the throne. The tears and promiſes of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to ſpare his life, and to leave him in the poſſeſſion of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their juſt indignation; and they contented themſelves with empowering their præfects to watch over the ſafety of Alexander, and the conduct of the emperor[61].

Sedition of the guards, and murder of Elagabalus. A. D. 222. 10th March.

It was impoſſible that ſuch a reconciliation ſhould laſt, or that even the mean ſoul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on ſuch humiliating terms of dependence. He ſoon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the ſoldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural ſuſpicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their paſſions into fury, and the tempeſt of the camp could only be appeaſed by the preſence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new inſtance of their affection for his couſin, and their contempt for his perſon, the emperor ventured to puniſh ſome of the leaders of the mutiny. His unſea-

[61] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1365. Herodian, l. v. p. 195—201. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 105. The laſt of the three hiſtorians ſeems to have followed the beſt authors in his account of the revolution.

ſonable

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ſonable ſeverity proved inſtantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himſelf. Elagabalus was maſſacred by the indignant Prætorians, his mutilated corpſe dragged through the ſtreets of the city, and thrown into the Tyber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the ſenate; the juſtice of whoſe decree has been ratified by poſterity[62].

Acceſſion of Alexander Severus.

In the room of Elagabalus, his couſin Alexander was raiſed to the throne by the Prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whoſe name he aſſumed, was the ſame as that of his predeceſſor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the ſenate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the Imperial dignity[63]. But as Alexander was a modeſt and dutiful youth, of only ſeventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæſa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who ſurvived but a ſhort time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the ſole regent of her ſon and of the empire.

Power of his mother Mamæa.

In every age and country, the wiſer, or at leaſt the ſtronger, of the two ſexes, has uſurped the powers of the ſtate, and confined the other to the cares and pleaſures of domeſtic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and eſpecially in thoſe of modern Europe, the

[62] The æra of the death of Elagabalus, and of the acceſſion of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valſecchi, Vignoli, and Torre biſhop of Adria. The queſtion is moſt aſſuredly intricate; but I ſtill adhere to the authority of Dion; the truth of whoſe calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whoſe text is juſtified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonaras, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what ſhall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We ſhall reply with the learned Valſecchi, that the uſurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the ſon of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After reſolving this great difficulty, the ſmaller knots of this queſtion may be eaſily untied, or cut aſunder.

[63] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 114. By this unuſual precipitation, the ſenate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.

gallant

gallant ſpirit of chivalry, and the law of ſucceſſion, have accuſtomed us to allow a ſingular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the abſolute ſovereign of a great kingdom, in which ſhe would be deemed incapable of exerciſing the ſmalleſt employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were ſtill conſidered as the generals and magiſtrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although diſtinguiſhed by the name of Auguſta, were never aſſociated to their perſonal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of thoſe primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and reſpect[64]. The haughty Agrippina aſpired, indeed, to ſhare the honours of the empire, which ſhe had conferred on her ſon; but her mad ambition, deteſted by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was diſappointed by the artful firmneſs of Seneca and Burrhus[65]. The good ſenſe, or the indifference, of ſucceeding princes, reſtrained them from offending the prejudices of their ſubjects; and it was reſerved for the profligate Elagabalus, to diſcharge the acts of the ſenate, with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the ſide of the conſuls, and ſubſcribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legiſlative aſſembly. Her more prudent ſiſter, Mamæa, declined the uſeleſs and odious prerogative, and a ſolemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the ſenate, and devoting to the infernal gods, the head of the wretch by whom this ſanction ſhould be violated[66]. The ſubſtance, not the pageantry, of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an abſolute and laſting empire over the mind of her ſon, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander,

[64] Metellus Numidicus, the cenſor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind Nature allowed us to exiſt without the help of women, we ſhould be delivered from a very troubleſome companion; and he could recommend matrimony, only as the ſacrifice of private pleaſure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.

[65] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 5.

[66] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 102. 107.

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with her conſent, married the daughter of a Patrician; but his reſpect for his father-in-law, and love for the empreſs, were inconſiſtent with the tenderneſs or intereſt of Mamæa. The Patrician was executed on the ready accuſation of treaſon, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and baniſhed into Africa[67].

Wiſe and moderate adminiſtration.

Notwithſtanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as ſome inſtances of avarice, with which Mamæa is charged; the general tenour of her adminiſtration was equally for the benefit of her ſon and of the empire. With the approbation of the ſenate, ſhe choſe ſixteen of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous ſenators, as a perpetual council of ſtate, before whom every public buſineſs of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally diſtinguiſhed by his knowledge of, and his reſpect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmneſs of this ariſtocracy reſtored order and authority to the government. As ſoon as they had purged the city from foreign ſuperſtition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themſelves to remove his worthleſs creatures from every department of public adminiſtration, and to ſupply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of juſtice, became the only recommendations for civil offices. Valour, and the love of diſcipline, the only qualifications for military employments[68].

Education and virtuous temper of Alexander.

But the moſt important care of Mamæa and her wiſe counſellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whoſe perſonal

[67] Dion, l. lxxx. p. 1369. Herodian. l. vi. p. 206. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 131. Herodian repreſents the Patricians as innocent. The Auguſtan Hiſtory, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him, as guilty of a conſpiracy againſt the life of Alexander. It is impoſſible to pronounce between them: but Dion is an irreproachable witneſs of the jealouſy and cruelty of Mamæa toward the young empreſs, whoſe hard fate Alexander lamented, but durſt not oppoſe.

[68] Herodian, l. vi. p. 203. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119. The latter inſinuates, that when any law was to be paſſed, the council was aſſiſted by a number of able lawyers and experienced ſenators, whoſe opinions were ſeparately given, and taken down in writing.

qualities

qualities the happineſs or miſery of the Roman world muſt ultimately depend. The fortunate ſoil aſſiſted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent underſtanding ſoon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleaſure of knowledge, and the neceſſity of labour. A natural mildneſs and moderation of temper preſerved him from the aſſaults of paſſion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his eſteem for the wiſe Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poiſon of flattery.

Journal of his ordinary life.

The ſimple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleaſing picture of an accompliſhed emperor[69], and with ſome allowance for the difference of manners, might well deſerve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander roſe early: the firſt moments of the day were conſecrated to private devotion, and his domeſtic chapel was filled with the images of thoſe heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deſerved the grateful reverence of poſterity. But, as he deemed the ſervice of mankind the moſt acceptable worſhip of the gods, the greateſt part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he diſcuſſed public affairs, and determined private cauſes, with a patience and diſcretion above his years. The dryneſs of buſineſs was relieved by the charms of literature: and a portion of time was always ſet apart for his favourite ſtudies of poetry, hiſtory, and philoſophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taſte, enlarged his underſtanding, and gave him the nobleſt ideas of man and government. The exerciſes of the body ſucceeded to thoſe of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robuſt, ſurpaſſed moſt of his equals in the gymnaſtic arts. Refreſhed by the uſe of the bath and a ſlight dinner, he reſumed, with new

[69] See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory. The undiſtinguiſhing compiler has buried theſe intereſting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumſtances.

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vigour, the buſineſs of the day; and, till the hour of ſupper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his ſecretaries, with whom he read and anſwered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that muſt have been addreſſed to the maſter of the greateſt part of the world. His table was ſerved with the moſt frugal ſimplicity; and whenever he was at liberty to conſult his own inclination, the company conſiſted of a few ſelect friends, men of learning and virtue, amongſt whom Ulpian was conſtantly invited. Their converſation was familiar and inſtructive; and the pauſes were occaſionally enlivened by the recital of ſome pleaſing compoſition, which ſupplied the place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, ſo frequently ſummoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans[70]. The dreſs of Alexander was plain and modeſt, his demeanor courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his ſubjects; but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleuſinian myſteries, pronouncing the ſame ſalutary admonition; "Let none enter thoſe holy walls, unleſs he is conſcious of a "pure and innocent mind[71]."

General happineſs of the Roman world. A. D. 222—235.

Such an uniform tenour of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wiſdom and juſtice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preſerved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the acceſſion of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the ſucceſſive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it enjoyed an auſpicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppreſſive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended ſon, flouriſhed in peace and proſperity, under the adminiſtration of magiſtrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deſerve the love of the ſubjects, was their beſt and only method of obtaining the favour of their ſovereign. While ſome gentle

[70] See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.

[71] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119.

reſtraints

reſtraints were impoſed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of proviſions, and the intereſt of money, were reduced; by the paternal care of Alexander, whoſe prudent liberality, without diſtreſſing the induſtrious, ſupplied the wants and amuſements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the ſenate was reſtored; and every virtuous ſenator might approach the perſon of the emperor, without a fear, and without a bluſh.

Alexander refuſes the name of Antoninus.

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the diſſolute Verus, and by deſcent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the ſons of Severus, was beſtowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length proſtituted to the infamy of the high prieſt of Emeſa. Alexander, though preſſed by the ſtudied, and perhaps, ſincere importunity of the ſenate, nobly refuſed the borrowed luſtre of a name; whilſt in his whole conduct he laboured to reſtore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines[72].

He attempts to reform the army.

In the civil adminiſtration of Alexander, wiſdom was enforced by power, and the people, ſenſible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There ſtill remained a greater, a more neceſſary, but a more difficult enterpriſe; the reformation of the military order, whoſe intereſt and temper, confirmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the reſtraints of diſcipline, and careleſs of the bleſſings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his deſign the emperor affected to diſplay his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The moſt rigid œconomy

[72] See in the Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 116, 117, the whole conteſt between Alexander and the ſenate, extracted from the journals of that aſſembly. It happened on the ſixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almoſt a twelvemonth, the bleſſings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the ſenate waited to ſee whether Alexander would not aſſume it, as a family name.

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in every other branch of the adminiſtration, ſupplied a fund of gold and ſilver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the ſevere obligation of carrying ſeventeen days proviſion on their ſhoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as ſoon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty lazineſs. As Alexander deſpaired of correcting the luxury of his ſoldiers, he attempted, at leaſt, to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horſes, ſplendid armour, and ſhield enriched with ſilver and gold. He ſhared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impoſe, viſited, in perſon, the ſick and wounded, preſerved an exact regiſter of their ſervices and his own gratitude, and expreſſed, on every occaſion, the warmeſt regard for a body of men, whoſe welfare, as he affected to declare, was ſo cloſely connected with that of the ſtate [73]. By the moſt gentle arts he laboured to inſpire the fierce multitude with a ſenſe of duty, and to reſtore at leaſt a faint image of that diſcipline to which the Romans owed their empire over ſo many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themſelves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation ſerved only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

Seditions of the Prætorian guards, and murder of Ulpian.

The Prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had ſaved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was ſenſible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was reſtrained within the limits of reaſon and juſtice, they ſoon were more diſſatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their præfect, the wiſe Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was conſidered as the enemy of the ſoldiers, and to his pernicious

[73] It was a favourite ſaying of the emperor's, Se milites magis ſervare, quam ſeipſum; quod ſalus publica in his eſſet. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 130.

councils every ſcheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their diſcontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilſt the life of that excellent miniſter was defended by the grateful people. Terrified, at length, by the ſight of ſome houſes in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a ſigh, and left the virtuous, but unfortunate, Ulpian to his fate. He was purſued into the Imperial palace, and maſſacred at the feet of his maſter, who vainly ſtrove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable ſoldiers. Such was the deplorable weakneſs of government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend and his inſulted dignity, without ſtooping to the arts of patience and diſſimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of præfect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and abſence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy, but deſerved puniſhment of his crimes [74]. Under the reign of a juſt and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with inſtant death his moſt faithful miniſters, who were ſuſpected of an intention to correct their intolerable diſorders. The hiſtorian Dion Caſſius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the ſpirit of ancient diſcipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cauſe of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, inſtead of yielding to their ſeditious clamours, ſhewed a juſt ſenſe of his merit and ſervices, by appointing him his colleague

Danger of Dion Caſſius.

[74] Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 132.) mentions the ſedition raiſed againſt Ulpian by the ſoldiers, he conceals the cataſtrophe, as it might diſcover a weakneſs in the adminiſtration of his hero. From this deſigned omiſſion, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

in

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in the conſulſhip, and defraying from his own treaſury the expence of that vain dignity: but as it was juſtly apprehended, that if the ſoldiers beheld him with the enſigns of his office, they would revenge the inſult in his blood, the nominal firſt magiſtrate of the ſtate retired, by the emperor's advice, from the city, and ſpent the greateſt part of his conſulſhip at his villas in Campania [75].

Tumults of the legions.

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the inſolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiouſneſs with the ſame furious obſtinacy. The adminiſtration of Alexander was an unavailing ſtruggle againſt the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Meſopotamia, in Germany, freſh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was inſulted, and his life at laſt ſacrificed to the fierce diſcontents of the army [76]. One particular fact well deſerves to be recorded, as it illuſtrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a ſingular inſtance of their return to a ſenſe of duty and obedience. Whilſt the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Perſian expedition, the particulars of which we ſhall hereafter relate, the puniſhment of ſome ſoldiers, who had been diſcovered in the baths of women, excited a ſedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander aſcended his tribunal, and with a modeſt firmneſs repreſented to the armed multitude, the abſolute neceſſity as well as his inflexible reſolution of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predeceſſor, and of maintaining the diſcipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild expoſtulation. "Reſerve your "ſhouts," ſaid the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field "againſt the Perſians, the Germans, and the Sarmatians. Be ſilent

Firmneſs of the emperor.

[75] For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, ſee the mutilated concluſion of Dion's Hiſtory, l. lxxx. p. 1371.

[76] Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Caſſius, l. lxxx. p. 1369.

"in

" in the preſence of your ſovereign and benefactor, who beſtows " upon you the corn, the clothing, and the money of the provinces. " Be ſilent, or I ſhall no longer ſtyle you ſoldiers, but *citizens*[77], if " thoſe indeed who diſclaim the laws of Rome deſerve to be ranked " among the meaneſt of the people." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandiſhed arms already threatened his perſon. " Your courage," reſumed the intrepid Alexander, " would " be more nobly diſplayed in the field of battle; *me* you may de- " ſtroy, you cannot intimidate; and the ſevere juſtice of the republic " would puniſh your crime, and revenge my death." The legion ſtill perſiſted in clamorous ſedition, when the emperor pronounced, with a loud voice, the deciſive ſentence, " *Citizens!* lay down your arms, " and depart in peace to your reſpective habitations." The tempeſt was inſtantly appeaſed; the ſoldiers, filled with grief and ſhame, ſilently confeſſed the juſtice of their puniſhment and the power of diſcipline, yielded up their arms and military enſigns, and retired in confuſion, not to their camp, but to the ſeveral inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying ſpectacle of their repentance; nor did he reſtore them to their former rank in the army, till he had puniſhed with death thoſe tribunes whoſe connivance had occaſioned the mutiny. The grateful legion ſerved the emperor, whilſt living, and revenged him when dead[78].

Defects of his reign and character.

The reſolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of paſſion might equally determine the ſeditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breaſt. Perhaps, if the ſingular tranſaction had been inveſtigated by the penetration of a philoſopher, we ſhould diſcover the ſecret cauſes which on that occaſion authorized the boldneſs of the prince,

[77] Julius Cæſar had appeaſed a ſedition with the ſame word *Quirites*; which thus oppoſed to *Soldiers*, was uſed in a ſenſe of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the leſs honourable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. i. 43.

[78] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 132.

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and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious hiſtorian, we ſhould find this action, worthy of Cæſar himſelf, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common ſtandard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince, ſeem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his ſituation, the firmneſs of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakneſs and effeminacy from the ſoft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he bluſhed at his foreign origin, and liſtened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogiſts, who derived his race from the ancient ſtock of Roman nobility[79]. The pride and avarice of his mother caſt a ſhade on the glories of his reign; and by exacting from his riper years the ſame dutiful obedience which ſhe had juſtly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamæa expoſed to public ridicule both her ſon's character and her own[80]. The fatigues of the Perſian war irritated the military diſcontent; the unſucceſsful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a ſoldier. Every cauſe prepared, and every circumſtance haſtened, a revolution, which diſtracted the Roman empire with a long ſeries of inteſtine calamities.

Digreſſion on the finances of the empire.

The diſſolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occaſioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the houſe

[79] From the Metelli. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one ſhort period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon ſeven conſulſhips and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, ii. 11. and the Faſti.

[80] The life of Alexander, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, conſiſtent with the general hiſtory of the age; and, in ſome of the moſt invidious particulars, confirmed by the deciſive fragments of Dion. Yet from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuſe Herodian, and copy the Auguſtan Hiſtory. See Meſſ. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the oppoſite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Cæſarib. p. 315.) dwells with a viſible ſatisfaction on the effeminate weakneſs of the *Syrian*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.

of

of Severus, had all contributed to increaſe the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was ſtill impreſſed on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with ſome degree of order and perſpicuity. The perſonal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can intereſt us no farther than as they are connected with the general hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our conſtant attention to that great object, will not ſuffer us to overlook a moſt important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the ſentiments of a generous mind; it was the ſordid reſult of avarice, and will naturally be illuſtrated by ſome obſervations on the finances of that ſtate, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.

Eſtabliſhment

The ſiege of Veii in Tuſcany, the firſt conſiderable enterpriſe of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much leſs by the ſtrength of the place than by the unſkilfulneſs of the beſiegers. The unaccuſtomed hardſhips of ſo many winter campaigns, at the diſtance of near twenty miles from home [81], required more than common encouragements; and the ſenate wiſely prevented the clamours of the people, by the inſtitution of a regular pay for the ſoldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, aſſeſſed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens [82]. During more than two hundred years after the conqueſt of Veii, the victo-

[81] According to the more accurate Dionyſius, the city itſelf was only an hundred ſtadia, or twelve miles and a half from Rome; though ſome out-poſts might be advanced farther on the ſide of Etruria. Nardini, in a profeſſed treatiſe, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Caſtellana, to a little ſpot called Iſola, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

[82] See the 4th and 5th books of Livy. In the Roman Cenſus, property, power, and taxation, were commenſurate with each other.

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ries of the republic added leſs to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The ſtates of Italy paid their tribute in military ſervice only, and the vaſt force both by ſea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expence of the Romans themſelves. That high-ſpirited people (ſuch is often the generous enthuſiaſm of freedom) cheerfully ſubmitted to the moſt exceſſive but voluntary burdens, in the juſt confidence that they ſhould ſpeedily enjoy the rich harveſt of their labours. Their expectations were not diſappointed. In the courſe of a few years, the riches of Syracuſe, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Aſia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treaſures of Perſeus alone amounted to near two millions ſterling, and the Roman people, the ſovereign of ſo many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes[83]. The increaſing revenue of the provinces was found ſufficient to defray the ordinary eſtabliſhment of war and government, and the ſuperfluous maſs of gold and ſilver was depoſited in the temple of Saturn, and reſerved for any unforeſeen emergency of the ſtate[84].

and abolition of the tribute on Roman citizens,

Hiſtory has never perhaps ſuffered a greater or more irreparable injury, than in the loſs of the curious regiſter bequeathed by Auguſtus to the ſenate, in which that experienced prince ſo accurately balanced the revenues and expences of the Roman empire[85]. Deprived of this clear and comprehenſive eſtimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from ſuch of the ancients as have accidentally turned aſide from the ſplendid to the more uſeful parts of hiſtory. We are informed that, by the conqueſts of Pompey, the tributes of Aſia were raiſed from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half ſterling[86]. Under the laſt and moſt indolent of the Ptolemies, the re-

Tributes of the provinces

of Aſia,

of Egypt,

[83] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. Plutarch. in P. Æmil. p. 275.

[84] See a fine deſcription of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Pharſ. l. iii. v. 155, &c.

[85] Tacit. in Annal. i. 11. It ſeems to have exiſted in the time of Appian.

[86] Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642.

venue

venue of Egypt is ſaid to have amounted to twelve thouſand five hundred talents; a ſum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards conſiderably improved by the more exact œconomy of the Romans, and the increaſe of the trade of Æthiopia and India [87]. Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of thoſe two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each other in value [88]. The ten thouſand Euboic or Phœnician talents, about four millions ſterling [89], which vanquiſhed Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a ſlight acknowledgment of the ſuperiority of Rome [90], and cannot bear the leaſt proportion with the taxes afterwards raiſed both on the lands and on the perſons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coaſt of Africa was reduced into a province [91].

of Gaul,

of Africa,

Spain, by a very ſingular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The diſcovery of the rich weſtern continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppreſſion of the ſimple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of ſtrangers, form an exact type of the more recent hiſtory of Spaniſh America [92]. The Phœnicans were acquainted only with the ſea-coaſt of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almoſt every part of the ſoil was found pregnant with copper, ſilver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena which yielded every day twenty-five thouſand drachms of ſilver, or about three hundred thouſand pounds a year [93]. Twenty thouſand pound weight of gold was annu-

of Spain,

[87] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 798.

[88] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. he ſeems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.

[89] The Euboic, the Phœnician, and Alexandrian talents, were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper of ancient weights and meaſures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable, that the ſame talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.

[90] Polyb. l. xv. c. 2.

[91] Appian in Punicis, p. 84.

[92] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians a little more than a thouſand years before Chriſt. See Vell. Paterc. i. 2.

[93] Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.

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ally received from the provinces of Aſturia, Gallicia, and Luſitania [94].

of the iſle of Gyarus.

We want both leiſure and materials to purſue this curious inquiry through the many potent ſtates that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where conſiderable wealth had been depoſited by nature, or collected by man, if we obſerve the ſevere attention that was directed to the abodes of ſolitude and ſterility. Auguſtus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their exceſſive impoſitions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was a little iſland, or rather a rock, of the Ægean ſea, deſtitute of freſh water and every neceſſary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fiſhermen [95].

Amount of the revenue.

From the faint glimmerings of ſuch doubtful and ſcattered lights, we ſhould be inclined to believe, 1ſt, That (with every fair allowance for the difference of times and circumſtances) the general income of the Roman provinces could ſeldom amount to leſs than fifteen or twenty millions of our money [96]; and, 2dly, That ſo ample a revenue muſt have been fully adequate to all the expences of the moderate government inſtituted by Auguſtus, whoſe court was the modeſt family of a private ſenator, and whoſe military eſtabliſhment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aſpiring views of conqueſt, or any ſerious apprehenſion of a foreign invaſion.

Taxes on Roman citizens inſtituted by Auguſtus.

Notwithſtanding the ſeeming probability of both theſe concluſions, the latter of them at leaſt is poſitively diſowned by the language

[94] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. He mentions likewiſe a ſilver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the ſtate.

[95] Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii. 69. and iv. 30. See in Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual miſery of Gyarus.

[96] Lipſius de magnitudine Romanâ (l. ii. c. 3.) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination.

and

and conduct of Auguſtus. It is not eaſy to determine whether, on this occaſion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppreſſor of liberty; whether he wiſhed to relieve the provinces, or to impoveriſh the ſenate and the equeſtrian order. But no ſooner had he aſſumed the reins of government, than he frequently intimated the inſufficiency of the tributes, and the neceſſity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. In the proſecution of this unpopular deſign, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed ſteps. The introduction of cuſtoms was followed by the eſtabliſhment of an exciſe, and the ſcheme of taxation was completed by an artful aſſeſſment on the real and perſonal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

The cuſtoms.

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money muſt have gradually eſtabliſhed itſelf. It has been already obſerved, that as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the ſtrong hand of conqueſt and power; ſo a conſiderable part of it was reſtored to the induſtrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Auguſtus and his ſucceſſors, duties were impoſed on every kind of merchandiſe, which through a thouſand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatſoever manner the law was expreſſed, it was the Roman purchaſer, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax [97]. The rate of the cuſtoms varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to ſuppoſe that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy: that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on thoſe of neceſſity, and that the productions raiſed or manufactured by the labour of the ſubjects of the empire, were treated with more indulgence than was ſhewn to the pernicious, or at leaſt the unpopular

[97] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 31.

commerce

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commerce of Arabia and India [98]. There is ſtill extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eaſtern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were ſubject to the payment of duties; cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics, a great variety of precious ſtones, among which the diamond was the moſt remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty [99]: Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, ſilks, both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs [100]. We may obſerve that the uſe and value of thoſe effeminate ſlaves gradually roſe with the decline of the empire.

The exciſe.

II. The exciſe, introduced by Auguſtus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It ſeldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was ſold in the markets or by public auction, from the moſt conſiderable purchaſes of lands and houſes, to thoſe minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude and daily conſumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occaſion of clamour and diſcontent. An emperor well acquainted with the wants and reſources of the ſtate, was obliged to declare by a public edict, that the ſupport of the army depended in a great meaſure on the produce of the exciſe [101].

Tax on legacies and inheritances.

III. When Auguſtus reſolved to eſtabliſh a permanent military force for the defence of his government againſt foreign and domeſtic enemies, he inſtituted a peculiar treaſury for the pay of the ſoldiers,

[98] See Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. vi. c. 23. l. xii. c. 18.). His obſervation, that the Indian commodities were ſold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us ſome notion of the produce of the cuſtoms, ſince that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thouſand pounds.

[99] The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

[100] M. Bouchaud, in his treatiſe de l'Impot chez les Romains, has tranſcribed this catalogue, from the Digeſt, and attempts to illuſtrate it by a very prolix commentary.

[101] Tacit. Annal. i. 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminiſhing the exciſe to one half; but the relief was of very ſhort duration.

the

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the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expences of war. The ample revenue of the exciſe, though peculiarly appropriated to thoſe uſes, was found inadequate. To ſupply the deficiency, the emperor ſuggeſted a new tax of five *per cent.* on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Auguſtus with his uſual temper. He candidly referred the whole buſineſs to the ſenate, and exhorted them to provide for the public ſervice by ſome other expedient of a leſs odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He inſinuated to them, that their obſtinacy would oblige him to *propoſe* a general land-tax and capitation. They acquieſced in ſilence [102]. The new impoſition on legacies and inheritances was however mitigated by ſome reſtrictions. It did not take place unleſs the object was of a certain value, moſt probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold [103]; nor could it be exacted from the neareſt of kin on the father's ſide [104]. When the rights of nature and poverty were thus ſecured, it ſeemed reaſonable, that a ſtranger, or a diſtant relation, who acquired an unexpected acceſſion of fortune, ſhould cheerfully reſign a twentieth part of it, for the benefit of the ſtate [105].

Such a tax, plentiful as it muſt prove in every wealthy community, was moſt happily ſuited to the ſituation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills, according to the dictates of reaſon or caprice, without any reſtraint from the modern fetters of entails and ſettlements. From various cauſes the partiality of paternal affection often loſt its influence over the ſtern patriots of the commonwealth, and the diſſolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his ſon the fourth part of his eſtate, he removed all

Suited to the laws and manners.

[102] Dion Caſſius, lv. p. 794. l. lvi. p. 825.

[103] The ſum is only fixed by conjecture.

[104] As the Roman law ſubſiſted for many ages, the *Cognati*, or relations on the mother's ſide, were not called to the ſucceſſion. This harſh inſtitution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally aboliſhed by Juſtinian.

[105] Plin. Panegyric. c. 37.

ground

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ground of legal complaint [106]. But a rich childleſs old man was a domeſtic tyrant, and his power increaſed with his years and infirmities. A ſervile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and conſuls, courted his ſmiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, ſerved his paſſions, and waited with impatience for his death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a moſt lucrative ſcience; thoſe who profeſſed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively deſcriptions of ſatire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game [107]. Yet, while ſo many unjuſt and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning, and ſubſcribed by folly, a few were the reſult of rational eſteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had ſo often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of an hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds [108]; nor do the friends of the younger Pliny ſeem to have been leſs generous to that amiable orator [109]. Whatever was the motive of the teſtator, the treaſury claimed, without diſtinction, the twentieth part of his eſtate; and in the courſe of two or three generations, the whole property of the ſubject muſt have gradually paſſed through the coffers of the ſtate.

Regulations of the emperors.

In the firſt and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a deſire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulſe of benevolence, conceived a wiſh of aboliſhing the oppreſſion of the cuſtoms and exciſe. The wiſeſt ſenators applauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him from the execution of a deſign, which would have diſſolved the ſtrength and reſources of the republic [110]. Had it indeed been poſſible to realize this dream of fancy, ſuch princes

[106] See Heineccius in the Antiquit. Juris Romani, l. ii.

[107] Horat. l. ii. Sat. v. Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. ii. Epiſt. 20.

[108] Cicero in Philipp. ii. c. 16.

[109] See his epiſtles. Every ſuch will gave him an occaſion of diſplaying his reverence to the dead, and his juſtice to the living. He reconciled both, in his behaviour to a ſon who had been diſinherited by his mother (v. 1.).

[110] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 50. Eſprit des Loix, l. xii. c. 19.

as

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as Trajan and the Antonines would ſurely have embraced with ardour the glorious opportunity of conferring ſo ſignal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildneſs and preciſion of their laws aſcertained the rule and meaſure of taxation, and protected the ſubject of every rank againſt arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the inſolent vexation of the farmers of the revenue[111]. For it is ſomewhat ſingular, that, in every age, the beſt and wiſeſt of the Roman governors perſevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at leaſt of the exciſe and cuſtoms[112].

Edict of Caracalla.

The ſentiments, and, indeed, the ſituation of Caracalla, were very different from thoſe of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averſe to the welfare of his people, he found himſelf under the neceſſity of gratifying the inſatiate avarice, which he had excited in the army. Of the ſeveral impoſitions introduced by Auguſtus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the moſt fruitful, as well as the moſt comprehenſive. As its influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increaſed with the gradual extenſion of the ROMAN CITY. The new citizens, though charged, on equal terms[113], with the payment of new taxes, which had not affected them as ſubjects, derived an ample compenſation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair proſpect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their ambition. But the favour, which implied a diſtinction, was loſt in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to aſſume the vain title, and the real obliga-

The freedom of the city given to all the provincials, for the purpoſe of taxation.

[111] See Pliny's Panegyric, the Auguſtan Hiſtory, and Burman. de Vectigal. paſſim.

[112] The tributes (properly ſo called) were not farmed; ſince the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

[113] The ſituation of the new citizens is minutely deſcribed by Pliny (Panegyric, c. 37, 38, 39). Trajan publiſhed a law very much in their favour.

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tions, of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious ſon of Severus contented with ſuch a meaſure of taxation, as had appeared ſufficient to his moderate predeceſſors. Inſtead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was reſtored after his death) he cruſhed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron ſceptre [114].

Temporary reduction of the tribute.

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impoſitions of Roman citizens, they ſeemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of ſubjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended ſon. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the ſame time, levied in the provinces. It was reſerved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them in a great meaſure from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the ſum exacted at the time of his acceſſion [115]. It is impoſſible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to ſpare ſo trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again ſprang up with the moſt luxuriant growth, and in the ſucceeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly ſhade. In the courſe of this hiſtory, we ſhall be too often ſummoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the uſe of the court, the army, and the capital.

Conſequences of the univerſal freedom of Rome.

As long as Rome and Italy were reſpected as the centre of government, a national ſpirit was preſerved by the ancient, and inſenſibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were

[114] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1295.

[115] He who paid ten *aurei*, the uſual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 127. with the commentary of Salmaſius.

well

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well inſtructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had riſen, by equal ſteps, through the regular ſucceſſion of civil and military honours[116]. To their influence and example we may partly aſcribe the modeſt obedience of the legions during the two firſt centuries of the Imperial hiſtory.

But when the laſt encloſure of the Roman conſtitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the ſeparation of profeſſions gradually ſucceeded to the diſtinction of ranks. The more poliſhed citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as lawyers and magiſtrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peaſants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp, no ſcience but that of war, no civil laws, and ſcarcely thoſe of military diſcipline. With bloody hands, ſavage manners, and deſperate reſolutions, they ſometimes guarded, but much oftener ſubverted, the throne of the emperors.

[116] See the lives of Agricola, Veſpaſian, and indeed of all the eminent men of thoſe times. Trajan, Severus, and his three competitors;

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The Elevation and Tyranny of Maximin.—Rebellion in Africa and Italy, under the Authority of the Senate.—Civil Wars and Seditions.—Violent Deaths of Maximin and his Son, of Maximus and Balbinus, and of the three Gordians.—Uſurpation and ſecular Games of Philip.

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The apparent ridicule

OF the various forms of government, which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy ſeems to preſent the faireſt ſcope for ridicule. Is it poſſible to relate, without an indignant ſmile, that, on the father's deceaſe, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, deſcends to his infant ſon, as yet unknown to mankind and to himſelf; and that the braveſt warriors and the wiſeſt ſtateſmen, relinquiſhing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and proteſtations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint theſe obvious topics in the moſt dazzling colours, but our more ſerious thoughts will reſpect a uſeful prejudice, that eſtabliſhes a rule of ſucceſſion, independent of the paſſions of mankind; and we ſhall cheerfully acquieſce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themſelves a maſter.

and ſolid advantages of hereditary ſucceſſion.

In the cool ſhade of retirement, we may eaſily deviſe imaginary forms of government, in which the ſceptre ſhall be conſtantly beſtowed on the moſt worthy, by the free and incorrupt ſuffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns theſe airy fabrics, and

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and teaches us, that, in a large ſociety, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wiſeſt, or to the moſt numerous, part of the people. The army is the only order of men ſufficiently united to concur in the ſame ſentiments, and powerful enough to impoſe them on the reſt of their fellow-citizens: but the temper of ſoldiers, habituated at once to violence and to ſlavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal, or even a civil conſtitution. Juſtice, humanity, or political wiſdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themſelves, to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their eſteem, and liberality will purchaſe their ſuffrage; but the firſt of theſe merits is often lodged in the moſt ſavage breaſts; the latter can only exert itſelf at the expence of the public; and both may be turned againſt the poſſeſſor of the throne, by the ambition of a daring rival.

Want of it in the Roman empire productive of the greateſt calamities.

The ſuperior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the ſanction of time and popular opinion, is the plaineſt and leaſt invidious of all diſtinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguiſhes the hopes of faction, and the conſcious ſecurity diſarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm eſtabliſhment of this idea, we owe the peaceful ſucceſſion, and mild adminiſtration, of European monarchies. To the defect of it, we muſt attribute the frequent civil wars, through which an Aſiatic Deſpot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet, even in the Eaſt, the ſphere of contention is uſually limited to the princes of the reigning houſe, and as ſoon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren, by the ſword and the bow-ſtring, he no longer entertains any jealouſy of his meaner ſubjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the ſenate had ſunk into contempt, was a vaſt ſcene of confuſion. The royal, and even noble, families of the provinces, had long ſince been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had ſucceſſively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæſars; and whilſt thoſe

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thoſe princes were ſhackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and diſappointed by the repeated failure of their poſterity[1], it was impoſſible that any idea of hereditary ſucceſſion ſhould have taken root in the minds of their ſubjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one aſſumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were ſet looſe from the ſalutary reſtraints of law and prejudice; and the meaneſt of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raiſed by valour and fortune to a rank in the army, in which a ſingle crime would enable him to wreſt the ſceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular maſter. After the murder of Alexander Severus, and the elevation of Maximin, no emperor could think himſelf ſafe upon the throne, and every barbarian peaſant of the frontier might aſpire to that auguſt, but dangerous ſtation.

Birth and fortunes of Maximin.

About thirty-two years before that event, the emperor Severus, returning from an eaſtern expedition, halted in Thrace, to celebrate, with military games, the birth-day of his younger ſon, Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold their ſovereign, and a young barbarian of gigantic ſtature earneſtly ſolicited, in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wreſtling. As the pride of diſcipline would have been diſgraced in the overthrow of a Roman ſoldier by a Thracian peaſant, he was matched with the ſtouteſt followers of the camp, ſixteen of whom he ſucceſſively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by ſome trifling gifts, and a permiſſion to inliſt in the troops. The next day, the happy barbarian was diſtinguiſhed above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the faſhion of his country. As ſoon as he perceived that he had attracted the emperor's notice, he inſtantly ran up to his horſe, and followed him on foot, without

[1] There had been no example of three ſucceſſive generations on the throne; only three inſtances of ſons who ſucceeded their fathers. The marriages of the Cæſars (notwithſtanding the permiſſion, and the frequent practice of divorces) were generally unfruitful.

the leaſt appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thra- "cian," ſaid Severus, with aſtoniſhment, "art thou diſpoſed to wreſtle after thy race?" Moſt willingly, Sir, replied the unwearied youth, and, almoſt in a breath, overthrew ſeven of the ſtrongeſt ſoldiers in the army. A gold collar was the prize of his matchleſs vigour and activity, and he was immediately appointed to ſerve in the horſe-guards who always attended on the perſon of the ſovereign[2].

His military ſervice and honours.

Maximin, for that was his name, though born on the territories of the empire, deſcended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a Goth, and his mother, of the nation of the Alani. He diſplayed, on every occaſion, a valour equal to his ſtrength; and his native fierceneſs was ſoon tempered or diſguiſed by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his ſon, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and eſteem of both thoſe princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to ſerve under the aſſaſſin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate inſults of Elagabalus. On the acceſſion of Alexander he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a ſtation uſeful to the ſervice, and honourable to himſelf. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, ſoon became, under his care, the beſt diſciplined of the whole army. With the general applauſe of the ſoldiers, who beſtowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was ſucceſſively promoted to the firſt military command[3]; and had not he ſtill retained too much of his ſavage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own ſiſter in marriage to the ſon of Maximin[4].

[2] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 138.

[3] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 140. Herodian, l. vi. p. 223. Aurelius Victor. By comparing theſe authors, it ſhould ſeem, that Maximin had the particular command of the Triballian horſe, with the general commiſſion of diſciplining the recruits of the whole army. His Biographer ought to have marked, with more care, his exploits, and the ſucceſſive ſteps of his military promotions.

[4] See the original letter of Alexander Severus, Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 149.

Inſtead

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Conſpiracy of Maximin.

Inſtead of ſecuring his fidelity, theſe favours ſerved only to inflame the ambition of the Thracian peaſant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit, as long as he was conſtrained to acknowledge a ſuperior. Though a ſtranger to real wiſdom, he was not devoid of a ſelfiſh cunning, which ſhewed him, that the emperor had loſt the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their diſcontent to his own advantage. It is eaſy for faction and calumny to ſhed their poiſon on the adminiſtration of the beſt of princes, and to accuſe even their virtues, by artfully confounding them with thoſe vices to which they bear the neareſt affinity. The troops liſtened with pleaſure to the emiſſaries of Maximin. They bluſhed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had ſupported the vexatious diſcipline impoſed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid ſlave of his mother and of the ſenate. It was time, they cried, to caſt away that uſeleſs phantom of the civil power, and to elect for their prince and general a real ſoldier, educated in camps, exerciſed in war, who would aſſert the glory, and diſtribute among his companions the treaſures of the empire. A great army was at that time aſſembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himſelf, who, almoſt immediately after his return from the Perſian war, had been obliged to march againſt the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intruſted to Maximin. One day as he entered the field of exerciſe, the troops, either from a ſudden impulſe or a formed conſpiracy, ſaluted him emperor, ſilenced by their loud acclamations his obſtinate refuſal, and haſtened to conſummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

A. D. 235. March 19.

Murder of Alexander Severus.

The circumſtances of his death are variouſly related. The writers, who ſuppoſe that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude and ambition of Maximin, affirm, that, after taking a frugal repaſt in the ſight of the army, he retired to ſleep, and that, about the ſeventh hour of the day, a part of his own guards broke into the

Imperial tent, and, with many wounds, aſſaſſinated their virtuous and unſuſpecting prince[5]. If we credit another, and indeed a more probable account, Maximin was inveſted with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the diſtance of ſeveral miles from the head-quarters; and he truſted for ſucceſs rather to the ſecret wiſhes than to the public declarations of the great army. Alexander had ſufficient time to awaken a faint ſenſe of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant profeſſions of fidelity quickly vaniſhed on the appearance of Maximin, who declared himſelf the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimouſly acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The ſon of Mamæa, betrayed and deſerted, withdrew into his tent, deſirous at leaſt to conceal his approaching fate from the inſults of the multitude. He was ſoon followed by a tribune and ſome centurions, the miniſters of death; but, inſtead of receiving with manly reſolution the inevitable ſtroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties diſgraced the laſt moments of his life, and converted into contempt ſome portion of the juſt pity which his innocence and misfortunes muſt inſpire. His mother Mamæa, whoſe pride and avarice he loudly accuſed as the cauſe of his ruin, periſhed with her ſon. The moſt faithful of his friends were ſacrificed to the firſt fury of the ſoldiers. Others were reſerved for the more deliberate cruelty of the uſurper; and thoſe who experienced the mildeſt treatment, were ſtripped of their employments, and ignominiouſly driven from the court and army[6].

Tyranny of Maximin.

The former tyrants, Caligula and Nero, Commodus and Caracalla, were all diſſolute and unexperienced youths[7], educated in the pur-

[5] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 135. I have ſoftened ſome of the moſt improbable circumſtances of this wretched biographer. From this ill-worded narration, it ſhould ſeem, that the prince's buffoon having accidentally entered the tent, and awakened the ſlumbering monarch, the fear of puniſhment urged him to perſuade the diſaffected ſoldiers to commit the murder.

[6] Herodian, l. vi. p. 223—227.

[7] Caligula, the eldeſt of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he aſcended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than ſeventeen.

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ple, and corrupted by the pride of empire, the luxury of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty of Maximin was derived from a different ſource, the fear of contempt. Though he depended on the attachment of the ſoldiers, who loved him for virtues like their own, he was conſcious that his mean and barbarian origin, his ſavage appearance, and his total ignorance of the arts and inſtitutions of civil life [8], formed a very unfavourable contraſt with the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembered, that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the door of the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the inſolence of their ſlaves. He recollected too the friendſhip of a few who had relieved his poverty, and aſſiſted his riſing hopes. But thoſe who had ſpurned, and thoſe who had protected the Thracian, were guilty of the ſame crime, the knowledge of his original obſcurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of ſeveral of his benefactors, Maximin publiſhed, in characters of blood, the indelible hiſtory of his baſeneſs and ingratitude [9].

The dark and ſanguinary ſoul of the tyrant, was open to every ſuſpicion againſt thoſe among his ſubjects who were the moſt diſtinguiſhed by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed with the ſound of treaſon, his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conſpiracy againſt his life was either diſcovered or imagined, and Magnus, a conſular ſenator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witneſs, without a trial, and without an opportunity of defence, Magnus, with four thouſand of his ſuppoſed accomplices, were put to death; Italy and the whole empire were infeſted with innumerable ſpies and informers. On the ſlighteſt accuſation, the firſt of the Roman nobles, who had governed provinces, com-

[8] It appears that he was totally ignorant of the Greek language; which, from its univerſal uſe in converſation and letters, was an eſſential part of every liberal education.

[9] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 141. Herodian, l. vii. p. 237. The latter of theſe hiſtorians has been moſt unjuſtly cenſured for ſparing the vices of Maximin.

manded armies, and been adorned with the conſular and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages, and hurried away to the emperor's preſence. Confiſcation, exile, or ſimple death, were eſteemed uncommon inſtances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate ſufferers he ordered to be ſewed up in the hides of ſlaughtered animals, others to be expoſed to wild beaſts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign, he diſdained to viſit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occaſionally, removed from the banks of the Rhine to thoſe of the Danube, was the ſeat of his ſtern deſpotiſm, which trampled on every principle of law and juſtice, and was ſupported by the avowed power of the ſword [10]. No man of noble birth, elegant accompliſhments, or knowledge of civil buſineſs, was ſuffered near his perſon; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of thoſe ancient chiefs of ſlaves and gladiators, whoſe ſavage power had left a deep impreſſion of terror and deteſtation [11].

Oppreſſion of the provinces.

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illuſtrious ſenators, or even to the bold adventurers, who in the court or army expoſe themſelves to the caprice of fortune, the body of the people viewed their ſufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleaſure. But the tyrant's avarice, ſtimulated by the inſatiate deſires of the ſoldiers, at length attacked the public property. Every city of the empire was poſſeſſed of an independent revenue, deſtined to purchaſe corn for the multitude, and to ſupply the expences of the games and entertainments. By a ſingle act of authority, the whole maſs of wealth was at once confiſcated for the uſe of the Imperial

[10] The wife of Maximin, by inſinuating wiſe counſels with female gentleneſs, ſometimes brought back the tyrant to the way of truth and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xiv. c. 1. where he alludes to the fact which he had more fully related under the reign of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals, that Paullina was the name of this benevolent empreſs; and from the title of *Diva*, that ſhe died before Maximin. (Valeſius ad loc. cit. Ammian.) Spanheim de U. et P. N. tom. ii. p. 300.

[11] He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 141.

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treaſury. The temples were ſtripped of their moſt valuable offerings of gold and ſilver, and the ſtatues of gods, heroes, and emperors were melted down and coined into money. Theſe impious orders could not be executed without tumults and maſſacres, as in many places the people choſe rather to die in the defence of their altars, than to behold in the midſt of peace their cities expoſed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The ſoldiers themſelves, among whom this ſacrilegious plunder was diſtributed, received it with a bluſh; and, hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the juſt reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring vengeance on the common enemy of human kind; and at length, by an act of private oppreſſion, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion againſt him [12].

Revolt in Africa. A. D. 237. April.

The procurator of Africa was a ſervant worthy of ſuch a maſter, who conſidered the fines and confiſcations of the rich as one of the moſt fruitful branches of the Imperial revenue. An iniquitous ſentence had been pronounced againſt ſome opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have ſtripped them of far the greater part of their patrimony. In this extremity, a reſolution that muſt either complete or prevent their ruin, was dictated by deſpair. A reſpite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the rapacious treaſurer, was employed in collecting from their eſtates a great number of ſlaves and peaſants, blindly devoted to the commands of their lords, and armed with the ruſtic weapons of clubs and axes. The leaders of the conſpiracy, as they were admitted to the audience of the procurator, ſtabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the aſſiſtance of their tumultuary train, ſeized on the little town of Thyſdrus [13], and erected

[12] Herodian, l. vii. p. 238. Zoſim. l. i. p. 15.

[13] In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the ſouth of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably by the Gordians, with the title of colony, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is ſtill in a very perfect ſtate. See Itinerar. Weſſeling, p. 59. and Shaw's Travels, p. 117.

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the ſtandard of rebellion againſt the ſovereign of the Roman empire. They reſted their hopes on the hatred of mankind againſt Maximin, and they judiciouſly reſolved to oppoſe to that deteſted tyrant, an emperor whoſe mild virtues had already acquired the love and eſteem of the Romans, and whoſe authority over the province would give weight and ſtability to the enterpriſe. Gordianus, their proconſul, and the object of their choice, refuſed, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous honour, and begged with tears that they would ſuffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without ſtaining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces compelled him to accept the Imperial purple, his only refuge indeed againſt the jealous cruelty of Maximin; ſince, according to the reaſoning of tyrants, thoſe who have been eſteemed worthy of the throne deſerve death, and thoſe who deliberate have already rebelled [14].

Character and elevation of the two Gordians.

The family of Gordianus was one of the moſt illuſtrious of the Roman ſenate. On the father's ſide, he was deſcended from the Gracchi; on his mother's, from the emperor Trajan. A great eſtate enabled him to ſupport the dignity of his birth, and, in the enjoyment of it, he diſplayed an elegant taſte and beneficent diſpoſition. The palace in Rome, formerly inhabited by the great Pompey, had been, during ſeveral generations, in the poſſeſſion of Gordian's family [15]. It was diſtinguiſhed by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Præneſte, was celebrated for baths of ſingular beauty and extent, for three ſtately rooms of an hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, ſupported by two hundred columns of the four moſt

[14] Herodian, l. vii. p. 239. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 153.

[15] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 152. The celebrated houſe of Pompey *in carinis*, was uſurped by Marc Antony, and conſequently became, after the Triumvir's death, a part of the Imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed and even encouraged the rich ſenators to purchaſe thoſe magnificent and uſeleſs places (Plin. Panegyric. c. 50.): and it may ſeem probable, that, on this occaſion, Pompey's houſe came into the poſſeſſion of Gordian's great grandfather.

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curious and coſtly ſorts of marble [16]. The public ſhows exhibited at his expence, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beaſts and gladiators [17], ſeem to ſurpaſs the fortune of a ſubject; and whilſt the liberality of other magiſtrates was confined to a few ſolemn feſtivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was ædile, every month in the year, and extended, during his conſulſhip, to the principal cities of Italy. He was twice elevated to the laſt mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he poſſeſſed the uncommon talent of acquiring the eſteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealouſy of tyrants. His long life was innocently ſpent in the ſtudy of letters and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconſul of Africa by the voice of the ſenate and the approbation of Alexander [18], he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces. As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the adminiſtration of his worthy repreſentative; after the barbarous Maximin had uſurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miſeries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above fourſcore years old; a laſt and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whoſe virtues he revived in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconſul, his ſon, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewiſe

[16] The Claudian, the Numidian, the Caryſtian, and the Synnadian. The colours of Roman marbles have been faintly deſcribed and imperfectly diſtinguiſhed. It appears, however, that the Caryſtian was a ſea green, and that the marble of Synnada was white mixed with oval ſpots of purple. See Salmaſius ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 164.

[17] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 151, 152. He ſometimes gave five hundred pair of Gladiators, never leſs than one hundred and fifty. He once gave for the uſe of the Circus one hundred Sicilian, and as many Cappadocian horſes. The animals deſigned for hunting, were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, ſtags, elks, wild aſſes, &c. Elephants and lions ſeem to have been appropriated to Imperial magnificence.

[18] See the original letter, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 152, which at once ſhews Alexander's reſpect for the authority of the ſenate, and his eſteem for the proconſul appointed by that aſſembly.

likewiſe declared emperor. His manners were leſs pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of ſixty-two thouſand volumes, atteſted the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were deſigned for uſe rather than for oſtentation [19]. The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian the reſemblance of Scipio Africanus, recollected with pleaſure that his mother was the grand-daughter of Antoninus Pius, and reſted the public hope on thoſe latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

They ſolicit the confirmation of their authority.

As ſoon as the Gordians had appeaſed the firſt tumult of a popular election, they removed their court to Carthage. They were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, ſince the viſit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majeſty of a Roman emperor. But theſe vain acclamations neither ſtrengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as intereſt, to ſolicit the approbation of the ſenate; and a deputation of the nobleſt provincials was ſent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and juſtify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long ſuffered with patience, were at length reſolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modeſt and reſpectful, excuſing the neceſſity which had obliged them to accept the Imperial title; but ſubmitting their election and their fate to the ſupreme judgment of the ſenate [20].

The ſenate ratifies their election of the Gordians;

The inclinations of the ſenate were neither doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the moſt illuſtrious houſes of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependants in that aſſembly, their merit

[19] By each of his concubines, the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though leſs numerous, were by no means contemptible.

[20] Herodian, l. vii. p. 243. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 144.

had

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had acquired many friends. Their mild adminiſtration opened the flattering proſpect of the reſtoration, not only of the civil but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had firſt obliged the ſenate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian peaſant [21], now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to aſſert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximin towards the ſenate was declared and implacable; the tameſt ſubmiſſion had not appeaſed his fury, the moſt cautious innocence would not remove his ſuſpicions; and even the care of their own ſafety urged them to ſhare the fortune of an enterpriſe, of which (if unſucceſsful) they were ſure to be the firſt victims. Theſe conſiderations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the conſuls and the magiſtrates. As ſoon as their reſolution was decided, they convoked in the temple of Caſtor the whole body of the ſenate, according to an ancient form of ſecrecy [22], calculated to awaken their attention, and to conceal their decrees. "Conſcript fathers," ſaid the conſul Syllanus, "the two Gordians, "both of conſular dignity, the one your proconſul, the other your "lieutenant, have been declared emperors by the general conſent "of Africa. Let us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to the "youth of Thyſdrus; let us return thanks to the faithful people "of Carthage, our generous deliverers from an horrid monſter— "Why do you hear me thus coolly, thus timidly? Why do you caſt "thoſe anxious looks on each other? why heſiate? Maximin "is a public enemy! may his enmity ſoon expire with him, and "may we long enjoy the prudence and felicity of Gordian the father, the valour and conſtancy of Gordian the ſon [23]!" The

[21] Quod tamen patres dum periculoſum exiſtimant; inermes armato reſiſtere approbaverunt. *Aurelius Victor.*

[22] Even the ſervants of the houſe, the ſcribes, &c. were excluded, and their office was filled by the ſenators themſelves. We are obliged to the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 159, for preſerving this curious example of the old diſcipline of the commonwealth.

[23] This ſpirited ſpeech, tranſlated from the Auguſtan hiſtorian, p. 156, ſeems tranſcribed by him from the original regiſters of the ſenate.

noble

noble ardour of the conſul revived the languid ſpirit of the ſenate. By an unanimous decree the election of the Gordians was ratified, Maximin, his ſon, and his adherents, were pronounced enemies of their country, and liberal rewards were offered to whoſoever had the courage and good fortune to deſtroy them.

and declares Maximin a public enemy.

During the emperor's abſence, a detachment of the Prætorian guards remained at Rome, to protect, or rather to command the capital. The Præfect Vitalianus had ſignalized his fidelity to Maximin, by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented, the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could reſcue the authority of the ſenate and the lives of the ſenators, from a ſtate of danger and ſuſpence. Before their reſolves had tranſpired, a quæſtor and ſome tribunes were commiſſioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldneſs and ſucceſs; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the ſtreets, proclaiming to the people and the ſoldiers, the news of the happy revolution. The enthuſiaſm of liberty was ſeconded by the promiſe of a large donative, in lands and money; the ſtatues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with tranſport, the authority of the two Gordians and the ſenate [24]; and the example of Rome was followed by the reſt of Italy.

Aſſumes the command of Rome and Italy,

A new ſpirit had ariſen in that aſſembly, whoſe long patience had been inſulted by wanton deſpotiſm and military licence. The ſenate aſſumed the reins of government, and, with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cauſe of freedom. Among the conſular ſenators recommended by their merit and ſervices to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was eaſy to ſelect twenty, not unequal to the command of an army, and the conduct of a war. To theſe was the defence of Italy intruſted. Each was appointed to act in his reſpective department, authorized to enrol and

and prepares for a civil war.

[24] Herodian, l. vii. p. 244.

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diſcipline the Italian youth; and inſtructed to fortify the ports and highways, againſt the impending invaſion of Maximin. A number of deputies, choſen from the moſt illuſtrious of the ſenatorian and equeſtrian orders, were diſpatched at the ſame time to the governors of the ſeveral provinces, earneſtly conjuring them to fly to the aſſiſtance of their country, and to remind the nations of their ancient ties of friendſhip with the Roman ſenate and people. The general reſpect with which theſe deputies were received, and the zeal of Italy and the provinces in favour of the ſenate, ſufficiently prove that the ſubjects of Maximin were reduced to that uncommon diſtreſs, in which the body of the people has more to fear from oppreſſion than from reſiſtance. The conſciouſneſs of that melancholy truth, inſpires a degree of perſevering fury, ſeldom to be found in thoſe civil wars which are artificially ſupported for the benefit of a few factious and deſigning leaders [25].

Defeat and death of the two Gordians. A. D. 237. 3d July.

For while the cauſe of the Gordians was embraced with ſuch diffuſive ardour, the Gordians themſelves were no more. The feeble court of Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of Capelianus, governor of Mauritania, who, with a ſmall band of veterans, and a fierce hoſt of barbarians, attacked a faithful, but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian ſallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undiſciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His uſeleſs valour ſerved only to procure him an honourable death, in the field of battle. His aged father, whoſe reign had not exceeded thirty-ſix days, put an end to his life on the firſt news of the defeat. Carthage, deſtitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was expoſed to the rapacious cruelty of a ſlave, obliged to ſatisfy his unrelenting maſter with a large account of blood and treaſure [26].

The

[25] Herodian, l. vii. p. 247. l. viii. p. 277. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 156—158.

[26] Herodian, l. vii. p. 254. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 150—160. We may obſerve, that one month

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Election of Maximus and Balbinus by the ſenate. 9th July.

The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with juſt, but unexpected terror. The ſenate convoked in the temple of Concord, affected to tranſact the common buſineſs of the day; and ſeemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the conſideration of their own, and the public danger. A ſilent-conſternation prevailed on the aſſembly, till a ſenator, of the name and family of Trajan, awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He repreſented to them, that the choice of cautious dilatory meaſures had been long ſince out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature, and exaſperated by injuries, was advancing towards Italy, at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative, was either to meet him bravely in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reſerved for unſucceſsful rebellion. "We have loſt, continued he, two excellent princes; but "unleſs we deſert ourſelves, the hopes of the republic have not "periſhed with the Gordians. Many are the ſenators, whoſe virtues "have deſerved, and whoſe abilities would ſuſtain, the Imperial "dignity. Let us elect two emperors, one of whom may con-"duct the war againſt the public enemy, whilſt his colleague "remains at Rome to direct the civil adminiſtration. I cheerfully "expoſe myſelf to the danger and envy of the nomination, and "give my vote in favour of Maximus and Balbinus. Ratify my "choice, conſcript fathers, or appoint in their place, others more "worthy of the empire." The general apprehenſion ſilenced the whiſpers of jealouſy; the merit of the candidates was univerſally acknowledged; and the houſe reſounded with the ſincere acclamations, of "long life and victory to the emperors Max-"imus and Balbinus. You are happy in the judgment of the

month and ſix days, for the reign of Gordian, is a juſt correction of Caſaubon and Panvinius, inſtead of the abſurd reading of one year and ſix months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zoſimus relates, l. i. p. 17. that the two Gordians periſhed by a tempeſt in the midſt of their navigation. A ſtrange ignorance of hiſtory, or a ſtrange abuſe of metaphors!

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"ſenate; may the republic be happy under your adminiſtra-
"tion[27]!"

Their characters.

The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors juſtified the moſt ſanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents ſeemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of diſtinguiſhed fame, and a wiſe magiſtrate, who had exerciſed with innocence and applauſe the civil juriſdiction in almoſt all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble[28], his fortune affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him, the love of pleaſure was corrected by a ſenſe of dignity, nor had the habits of eaſe deprived him of a capacity for buſineſs. The mind of Maximus was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raiſed himſelf from the meaneſt origin to the firſt employments of the ſtate and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the auſterity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his juſtice, whilſt he was Præfect of the city, commanded the eſteem of a people, whoſe affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been conſuls (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the ſenate; and ſince the one was ſixty and the other ſeventy-four years old[29], they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

After

[27] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 166, from the regiſters of the ſenate; the date is confeſſedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it.

[28] He was deſcended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted ſon of Theophanes the Greek hiſtorian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by the favour of Pompey, and preſerved it by the eloquence of Cicero (ſee Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendſhip of Cæſar (to whom he rendered the moſt important ſecret ſervices in the civil war) raiſed him to the conſulſhip and the pontificate, honours never yet poſſeſſed by a ſtranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Garamantes. See Dictionnaire de Bayle, au mot *Balbus*, where he diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral perſons of that name, and rectifies, with his uſual accuracy, the miſtakes of former writers concerning them.

[29] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 622. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a moderate

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Tumult at Rome. The younger Gordian is declared Cæſar.

After the ſenate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the conſular and tribunitian powers, the title of Fathers of their country, and the joint office of Supreme Pontiff, they aſcended to the Capitol, to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome[39]. The ſolemn rites of ſacrifice were diſturbed by a ſedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they ſufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increaſing numbers ſurrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obſtinate clamours they aſſerted their inherent right of conſenting to the election of their ſovereign; and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, beſides the two emperors choſen by the ſenate, a third ſhould be added of the family of the Gordians, as a juſt return of gratitude to thoſe princes who had ſacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city-guards, and the youth of the equeſtrian order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the ſeditious multitude. The multitude, armed with ſticks and ſtones, drove them back into the Capitol. It is prudent to yield when the conteſt, whatever may be the iſſue of it, muſt be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandſon of the elder, and nephew of the younger, Gordian, was produced to the people, inveſted with the ornaments and title of Cæſar. The tumult was appeaſed by this eaſy condeſcenſion; and the two emperors, as ſoon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy againſt the common enemy.

Maximin prepares to attack the ſenate and their emperors,

Whilſt in Rome and Africa revolutions ſucceeded each other with ſuch amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the moſt furious paſſions. He is ſaid to have received the news of the

moderate Greek, ſo groſsly ignorant of the hiſtory of the third century, that he creates ſeveral imaginary emperors, and confounds thoſe who really exiſted.

[39] Herodian, l. vii. p. 256, ſuppoſes that the ſenate was at firſt convoked in the Capitol, and is very eloquent on the occaſion. The Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 116, ſeems much more authentic.

rebellion

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rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the ſenate againſt him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beaſt; which, as it could not diſcharge itſelf on the diſtant ſenate, threatened the life of his ſon, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his perſon. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians, was quickly followed by the aſſurance that the ſenate, laying aſide all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had ſubſtituted in their room two emperors, with whoſe merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only conſolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms. The ſtrength of the legions had been aſſembled by Alexander from all parts of the empire. Three ſucceſsful campaigns againſt the Germans and the Sarmatians, had raiſed their fame, confirmed their diſcipline, and even increaſed their numbers, by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been ſpent in war, and the candid ſeverity of hiſtory cannot refuſe him the valour of a ſoldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general [31]. It might naturally be expected, that a prince of ſuch a character, inſtead of ſuffering the rebellion to gain ſtability by delay, ſhould immediately have marched from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Tyber, and that his victorious army, inſtigated by contempt for the ſenate, and eager to gather the ſpoils of Italy, ſhould have burned with impatience to finiſh the eaſy and lucrative conqueſt. Yet as far as we can truſt to the obſcure chronology of that period [32], it appears that

[31] In Herodian, l. vii. p. 249, and in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, we have three ſeveral orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome: M. de Tillemont has very juſtly obſerved, that they neither agree with each other, nor with truth. Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 799.

[32] The careleſſneſs of the writers of that age leaves us in a ſingular perplexity. 1. We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. Herodian, l. viii. p. 285. The authority of Cenſorinus (de Die Natali, c. 18.) enables us to fix thoſe games with certainty to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2. The election of Gordian by the ſenate, is fixed, with equal certainty, to the 27th of May; but we are at a loſs to diſcover, whether it was in the ſame or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintain the two

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that the operations of ſome foreign war deferred the Italian expedition till the enſuing ſpring. From the prudent conduct of Maximin, we may learn that the ſavage features of his character have been exaggerated by the pencil of party, that his paſſions, however impetuous, ſubmitted to the force of reaſon, and that the barbarian poſſeſſed ſomething of the generous ſpirit of Sylla, who ſubdued the enemies of Rome, before he ſuffered himſelf to revenge his private injuries[33].

Marches into Italy. A. D. 238. February.

When the troops of Maximin, advancing in excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian Alps, they were terrified by the ſilence and deſolation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The villages and open towns had been abandoned on their approach by the inhabitants, the cattle was driven away, the proviſions removed, or deſtroyed, the bridges broke down, nor was any thing left which could afford either ſhelter or ſubſiſtence to an invader. Such had been the wiſe orders of the generals of the ſenate; whoſe deſign was to protract the war, to ruin the army of Maximin by the ſlow operation of famine, and to conſume his ſtrength in the ſieges of the principal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully ſtored with men and proviſions from the deſerted country. Aquileia received and withſtood the firſt ſhock of the invaſion. The ſtreams that iſſue from the head of the Hadriatic gulf, ſwelled by the melting of the winter ſnows[34], oppoſed an unexpected obſtacle to the arms of

Siege of Aquileia.

two oppoſite opinions, bring into the field a deſultory troop of authorities, conjectures and probabilities. The one ſeems to draw out, the other to contract the ſeries of events, between thoſe periods, more than can be well reconciled to reaſon and hiſtory. Yet it is neceſſary to chuſe between them.

[33] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 24. The preſident de Monteſquieu (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expreſſes the ſentiments of the dictator, in a ſpirited and even a ſublime manner.

[34] Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 294.) thinks the melting of the ſnows ſuits better with the months of June or July, than with thoſe of February. The opinion of a man who paſſed his life between the Alps and the Appennines, is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I obſerve, 1. That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin verſion, and not in the Greek text of Herodian. 2. That the viciſſitude of ſuns and rains, to which the ſoldiers of Maximin were expoſed (Herodian

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of Maximin. At length, on a ſingular bridge, conſtructed with art and difficulty, of large hogſheads, he tranſported his army to the oppoſite bank, rooted up the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of Aquileia, demoliſhed the ſuburbs, and employed the timber of the buildings in the engines and towers, with which on every ſide he attacked the city. The walls, fallen to decay during the ſecurity of a long peace, had been haſtily repaired on this ſudden emergency; but the firmeſt defence of Aquileia conſiſted in the conſtancy of the citizens; all ranks of whom, inſtead of being diſmayed, were animated by the extreme danger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelenting temper. Their courage was ſupported and directed by Criſpinus and Menophilus, two of the twenty lieutenants of the ſenate, who, with a ſmall body of regular troops, had thrown themſelves into the beſieged place. The army of Maximin was repulſed in repeated attacks, his machines deſtroyed by ſhowers of artificial fire; and the generous enthuſiaſm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of ſucceſs, by the opinion, that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in perſon in the defence of his diſtreſſed worſhippers [35].

Conduct of Maximus.

The emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as Ravenna, to ſecure that important place, and to haſten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reaſon and policy. He was too ſenſible, that a ſingle town could not reſiſt the perſevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded, leſt the enemy, tired with the obſtinate reſiſtance of Aquileia,

dian, l. viii. p. 277.), denotes the ſpring rather than the ſummer. We may obſerve likewiſe, that theſe ſeveral ſtreams, as they melted into one, compoſed the Timavus, ſo poetically (in every ſenſe of the word) deſcribed by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the eaſt of Aquileia. See Cluver. Italia Antiqua, tom. i. p. 189, &c.

[35] Herodian, l. viii. p. 272. The Celtic deity was ſuppoſed to be Apollo, and received under that name the thanks of the ſenate. A temple was likewiſe built to Venus the bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for the military engines.

ſhould

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ſhould on a ſudden relinquiſh the fruitleſs ſiege, and march directly towards Rome. The fate of the empire and the cauſe of freedom muſt then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppoſe to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous but enervated youth of Italy; and a body of German auxiliaries, on whoſe firmneſs, in the hour of trial, it was dangerous to depend. In the midſt of theſe juſt alarms, the ſtroke of domeſtic conſpiracy puniſhed the crimes of Maximin, and delivered Rome and the ſenate from the calamities that would ſurely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

Murder of Maximin and his ſon. A. D. 238. April.

The people of Aquileia had ſcarcely experienced any of the common miſeries of a ſiege, their magazines were plentifully ſupplied, and ſeveral fountains within the walls aſſured them of an inexhauſtible reſource of freſh water. The ſoldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, expoſed to the inclemency of the ſeaſon, the contagion of diſeaſe, and the horrors of famine. The open country was ruined, the rivers filled with the ſlain, and polluted with blood. A ſpirit of deſpair and diſaffection began to diffuſe itſelf among the troops; and as they were cut off from all intelligenee, they eaſily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cauſe of the ſenate, and that they were left as devoted victims to periſh under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exaſperated by diſappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, inſtead of ſtriking terror, inſpired hatred and a juſt deſire of revenge. A party of Prætorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the ſentence of the ſenate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was ſlain in his tent, with his ſon (whom he had aſſociated to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the præfect, and the principal miniſters of his tyranny[36]. The ſight of their

[36] Herodian, l. viii. p. 279. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 146. The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. ix. 1.); we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek verſion of Pæanius.

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heads, borne on the point of ſpears, convinced the citizens of Aquileia, that the ſiege was at an end; the gates of the city were thrown open, a liberal market was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin, and the whole army joined in ſolemn proteſtations of fidelity to the ſenate and the people of Rome, and to their lawful emperors Maximus and Balbinus. Such was the deſerved fate of a brutal ſavage, deſtitute, as he has generally been repreſented, of every ſentiment that diſtinguiſhes a civilized, or even a human being. The body was ſuited to the ſoul. The ſtature of Maximin exceeded the meaſure of eight feet, and circumſtances almoſt incredible are related of his matchleſs ſtrength and appetite [37]. Had he lived in a leſs enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have deſcribed him as one of thoſe monſtrous giants, whoſe ſupernatural power was conſtantly exerted for the deſtruction of mankind.

His portrait.

It is eaſier to conceive than to deſcribe the univerſal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is ſaid to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal proceſſion, his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambaſſadors of almoſt all the cities of Italy, ſaluted with the ſplendid offerings of gratitude and ſuperſtition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the ſenate and people, who perſuaded themſelves that a golden age would ſucceed to an age of iron [38]. The conduct of the two emperors correſponded with theſe expectations. They adminiſtered juſtice in perſon; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppreſſive

Joy of the Roman world.

[37] Eight Roman feet and one third, which are equal to above eight Engliſh feet, as the two meaſures are to each other in the proportion of 967 to 1000. See Graves's diſcourſe on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about ſeven gallons of wine), and eat thirty or forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded waggon, break a horſe's leg with his fiſt, crumble ſtones in his hand, and tear up ſmall trees by the roots. See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[38] See the congratulatory letter of Claudius Julianus the conſul, to the two emperors, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

taxes

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taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and ſucceſſion, were repealed, or at leaſt moderated. Diſcipline was revived, and with the advice of the ſenate many wiſe laws were enacted by their imperial miniſters, who endeavoured to reſtore a civil conſtitution on the ruins of military tyranny. "What reward may "we expect for delivering Rome from a monſter?" was the queſtion aſked by Maximus, in a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus anſwered it without heſitation, "The love of the ſenate, of "the people, and of all mankind." "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "Alas! I dread the hatred of the ſoldiers, and "the fatal effects of their reſentment[39]." His apprehenſions were but too well juſtified by the event.

Sedition at Rome.

Whilſt Maximus was preparing to defend Italy againſt the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in ſcenes of blood and inteſtine diſcord. Diſtruſt and jealouſy reigned in the ſenate; and even in the temples where they aſſembled, every ſenator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midſt of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curioſity or a ſiniſter motive, audaciouſly thruſt themſelves into the houſe, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a conſular, and Mæcenas, a Prætorian ſenator, viewed with indignation their inſolent intruſion: drawing their daggers, they laid the ſpies, for ſuch they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then advancing to the door of the ſenate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to maſſacre the Prætorians, as the ſecret adherents of the tyrant. Thoſe who eſcaped the firſt fury of the tumult took refuge in the camp, which they defended with ſuperior advantage againſt the reiterated attacks of the people, aſſiſted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property of opulent nobles. The civil war laſted many days, with infinite loſs and confuſion on both ſides. When

[39] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 171.

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the pipes were broken that ſupplied the camp with water, the Prætorians were reduced to intolerable diſtreſs; but in their turn they made deſperate ſallies into the city, ſet fire to a great number of houſes, and filled the ſtreets with the blood of the inhabitants. The emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to reconcile the factions at Rome. But their animoſity, though ſmothered for a while, burnt with redoubled violence. The ſoldiers, deteſting the ſenate and the people, deſpiſed the weakneſs of a prince who wanted either the ſpirit or the power to command the obedience of his ſubjects[40].

Diſcontent of the Prætorian guards.

After the tyrant's death, his formidable army had acknowledged, from neceſſity rather than from choice, the authority of Maximus, who tranſported himſelf without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As ſoon as he had received their oath of fidelity, he addreſſed them in terms full of mildneſs and moderation; lamented, rather than arraigned, the wild diſorders of the times, and aſſured the ſoldiers, that of all their paſt conduct, the ſenate would remember only their generous deſertion of the tyrant, and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a ſolemn ſacrifice of expiation, and then diſmiſſed the legions to their ſeveral provinces, impreſſed, as he hoped, with a lively ſenſe of gratitude and obedience[41]. But nothing could reconcile the haughty ſpirit of the Prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome; but amidſt the general acclamations, the ſullen dejected countenance of the guards, ſufficiently declared that they conſidered themſelves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, thoſe who had ſerved under Maximin, and thoſe who had remained at Rome, inſenſibly commu-

[40] Herodian, l. viii. p. 258.

[41] Herodian, l. viii. p. 213.

nicated

nicated to each other their complaints and apprehenſions. The emperors choſen by the army had periſhed with ignominy; thoſe elected by the ſenate were ſeated on the throne [42]. The long diſcord between the civil and military powers was decided by a war, in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The ſoldiers muſt now learn a new doctrine of ſubmiſſion to the ſenate; and whatever clemency was affected by that politic aſſembly, they dreaded a ſlow revenge, coloured by the name of diſcipline, and juſtified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was ſtill in their own hands; and if they had courage to deſpiſe the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was eaſy to convince the world, that thoſe who were maſters of the arms, were maſters of the authority, of the ſtate.

Maſſacre of Maximus and Balbinus.

When the ſenate elected two princes, it is probable that, beſides the declared reaſon of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the ſecret deſire of weakening by diviſion the deſpotiſm of the ſupreme magiſtrate. Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and to themſelves. The jealouſy of power was ſoon exaſperated by the difference of character. Maximus deſpiſed Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn diſdained by his colleague as an obſcure ſoldier. Their ſilent diſcord was underſtood rather than ſeen [43]; but the mutual conſciouſneſs prevented them from uniting in any vigorous meaſures of defence againſt their common enemies of the Prætorian camp. The whole city was employed in the Capitoline games, and the emperors were left almoſt alone in the palace. On a ſudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of deſperate aſſaſſins. Ignorant of each other's ſituation or deſigns, for they already occupied very diſtant apartments, afraid to give or to receive

A. D. 238. July 15.

[42] The obſervation had been made imprudently enough in the acclamations of the ſenate, and with regard to the ſoldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton inſult. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 170.

[43] Diſcordiæ tacitæ, et quæ intelligerentur potius quam viderentur. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 170. This well-choſen expreſſion is probably ſtolen from ſome better writer.

aſſiſtance,

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assistance, they wasted the important moments in idle debates and fruitless recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain strife. They seized on these emperors of the senate, for such they called them with malicious contempt, stripped them of their garments, and dragged them in insolent triumph through the streets of Rome, with a design of inflicting a slow and cruel death on these unfortunate princes. The fear of a rescue from the faithful Germans of the Imperial guards, shortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thousand wounds, were left exposed to the insults or to the pity of the populace [44].

The third Gordian remains sole emperor.

In the space of a few months, six princes had been cut off by the sword. Gordian, who had already received the title of Cæsar, was the only person that occurred to the soldiers as proper to fill the vacant throne [45]. They carried him to the camp, and unanimously saluted him Augustus and Emperor. His name was dear to the senate and people; his tender age promised a long impunity of military licence; and the submission of Rome and the provinces to the choice of the Prætorian guards, saved the republic, at the expence indeed of its freedom and dignity, from the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of the capital [46].

Innocence and virtues of Gordian.

As the third Gordian was only nineteen years of age at the time of his death, the history of his life, were it known to us with greater accuracy than it really is, would contain little more than the account of his education, and the conduct of the ministers, who by turns abused or guided the simplicity of his unexperienced youth.

[44] Herodian, l. viii. p. 287, 288.

[45] Quia non alius erat in præsenti, is the expression of the Augustan History.

[46] Quintus Curtius (l. x. c. 9.) pays an elegant compliment to the emperor of the day, for having, by his happy accession, extinguished so many firebrands, sheathed so many swords, and put an end to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with attention every word of the passage, I am of opinion, that it suits better with the elevation of Gordian, than with any other period of the Roman History. In that case, it may serve to decide the age of Quintus Curtius. Those who place him under the first Cæsars, argue from the purity of his style, but are embarrassed by the silence of Quintilian, in his accurate list of Roman historians.

Immediately

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Immediately after his acceſſion, he fell into the hands of his mother's eunuchs, that pernicious vermin of the Eaſt, who, ſince the days of Elagabalus, had infeſted the Roman palace. By the artful conſpiracy of theſe wretches, an impenetrable veil was drawn between an innocent prince and his oppreſſed ſubjects, the virtuous diſpoſition of Gordian was deceived, and the honours of the empire ſold without his knowledge, though in a very public manner, to the moſt worthleſs of mankind. We are ignorant by what fortunate accident the emperor eſcaped from this ignominious ſlavery, and devolved his confidence on a miniſter, whoſe wiſe councils had no object except the glory of his ſovereign, and the happineſs of the people. It ſhould ſeem that love and learning introduced Miſitheus to the favour of Gordian. The young prince married the daughter of his maſter of rhetoric, and promoted his father-in-law to the firſt offices of the empire. Two admirable letters that paſſed between them, are ſtill extant. The miniſter, with the conſcious dignity of virtue, congratulates Gordian that he is delivered from the tyranny of the eunuchs [47], and ſtill more that he is ſenſible of his deliverance. The emperor acknowledges, with an amiable confuſion, the errors of his paſt conduct; and laments, with ſingular propriety, the misfortune of a monarch, from whom a venal tribe of courtiers perpetually labour to conceal the truth [48].

A. D. 240. Adminiſtration of Miſitheus.

The life of Miſitheus had been ſpent in the profeſſion of letters, not of arms; yet ſuch was the verſatile genius of that great man, that, when he was appointed Prætorian Præfect, he diſcharged the military duties of his place with vigour and ability. The Perſians had invaded Meſopotamia, and threatened Antioch. By the per-

The Perſian war. A. D. 242.

[47] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 161. From ſome hints in the two letters, I ſhould expect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace, without ſome degree of gentle violence, and that young Gordian rather approved of, than conſented to, their diſgrace.

[48] Duxit uxorem filiam Miſithei, quem causâ eloquentiæ dignum parentela ſuâ putavit; et præfectum ſtatim fecit; poſt quod, non puerile jam et contemptibile videbatur imperium.

ſuaſion

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ſuaſion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the laſt time recorded in hiſtory, the temple of Janus, and marched in perſon into the Eaſt. On his approach with a great army, the Perſians withdrew their garriſons from the cities which they had already taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Gordian enjoyed the pleaſure of announcing to the ſenate the firſt ſucceſs of his arms, which he aſcribed with a becoming modeſty and gratitude to the wiſdom of his father and Præfect. During the whole expedition, Miſitheus watched over the ſafety and diſcipline of the army; whilſt he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by eſtabliſhing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, ſtraw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier[49]. But the proſperity of Gordian expired with Miſitheus, who died of a flux, not without very ſtrong ſuſpicions of poiſon. Philip, his ſucceſſor in the præfecture, was an Arab by birth, and conſequently, in the earlier part of his life, a robber by profeſſion. His riſe from ſo obſcure a ſtation to the firſt dignities of the empire, ſeems to prove that he was a bold and able leader. But his boldneſs prompted him to aſpire to the throne, and his abilities were employed to ſupplant, not to ſerve, his indulgent maſter. The minds of the ſoldiers were irritated by an artificial ſcarcity, created by his contrivance in the camp; and the diſtreſs of the army was attributed to the youth and incapacity of the prince. It is not in our power to trace the ſucceſſive ſteps of the ſecret conſpiracy and open ſedition, which were at length fatal to Gordian. A ſepulchral monument was erected to his memory on the ſpot[50] where he was killed, near the conflux

A. D. 243. Arts of Philip.

Murder of Gordian. A. D. 244. March.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 162. Aurelius Victor. Porphyrius in Vit. Plotin. ap. Fabricium Biblioth. Græc. l. iv. c. 36. The philoſopher Plotinus accompanied the army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India.

[50] About twenty miles from the little town of Circeſium, on the frontier of the two empires.

of

of the Euphrates with the little river Aboras [51]. The fortunate Philip, raiſed to the empire by the votes of the ſoldiers, found a ready obedidience from the ſenate and the provinces [52].

Form of a military republic.

We cannot forbear tranſcribing the ingenious, though ſomewhat fanciful deſcription, which a celebrated writer of our own times has traced of the military government of the Roman empire. "What in "that age was called the Roman empire, was only an irregular re- "public, not unlike the Ariſtocracy [53] of Algiers [54], where the militia, "poſſeſſed of the ſovereignty, creates and depoſes a magiſtrate, who is "ſtyled a Dey. Perhaps, indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, "that a military government is, in ſome reſpects, more republican than "monarchical. Nor can it be ſaid that the ſoldiers only partook of "the government by their diſobedience and rebellions. The ſpeeches "made to them by the emperors, were they not at length of the ſame "nature as thoſe formerly pronounced to the people by the conſuls "and the tribunes? And although the armies had no regular place "or forms of aſſembly; though their debates were ſhort, their action "ſudden, and their reſolves ſeldom the reſult of cool reflection, did "they not diſpoſe, with abſolute ſway, of the public fortune? What "was the emperor, except the miniſter of a violent government "elected for the private benefit of the ſoldiers?

"When the army had elected Philip, who was Prætorian præfect "to the third Gordian; the latter demanded, that he might remain

[51] The inſcription (which contained a very ſingular pun) was eraſed by the order of Licinius, who claimed ſome degree of relationſhip to Philip (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 165.); but the *tumulus* or mound of earth which formed the ſepulchre, ſtill ſubſiſted in the time of Julian. See Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 5.

[52] Aurelius Victor. Eutrop. ix. 2. Oroſius, vii. 20. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 5. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 19. Philip, who was a native of Boſtra, was about forty years of age.

[53] Can the epithet of *Ariſtocracy* be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government floats between the extremes of abſolute monarchy and wild democracy.

[54] The military republic of the Mamalukes in Egypt, would have afforded M. de Monteſquieu (ſee Conſiderations ſur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. 16.) a juſter and more noble parallel.

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"ſole emperor; he was unable to obtain it. He requeſted, that the "power might be equally divided between them; the army would "not liſten to his ſpeech. He conſented to be degraded to the rank "of Cæſar; the favour was refuſed him. He deſired, at leaſt, he "might be appointed Prætorian præfect; his prayer was rejected. "Finally, he pleaded for his life. The army, in theſe ſeveral "judgments, exerciſed the ſupreme magiſtracy." According to the hiſtorian, whoſe doubtful narrative the preſident De Monteſquieu has adopted, Philip, who, during the whole tranſaction, had preſerved a ſullen ſilence, was inclined to ſpare the innocent life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his innocence might excite a dangerous compaſſion in the Roman world; he commanded, without regard to his ſuppliant cries, that he ſhould be ſeized, ſtript, and led away to inſtant death. After a moment's pauſe the inhuman ſentence was executed [55].

Reign of Philip.

On his return from the eaſt to Rome, Philip, deſirous of obliterating the memory of his crimes, and of captivating the affections of the people, ſolemnized the ſecular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their inſtitution or revival by Auguſtus [56], they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian, and by Severus, and were now renewed the fifth time, on the accompliſhment of the full period of a thouſand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumſtance of the ſecular games was

Secular games. A. D. 248. April 21.

[55] The Auguſtan Hiſtory (p. 163, 164.) cannot, in this inſtance, be reconciled with itſelf or with probability. How could Philip condemn his predeceſſor, and yet conſecrate his memory? How could he order his public execution, and yet, in his letters to the ſenate, exculpate himſelf from the guilt of his death? Philip, though an ambitious uſurper, was by no means a mad tyrant. Some chronological difficulties have likewiſe been diſcovered by the nice eyes of Tillemont and Muratori, in this ſuppoſed aſſociation of Philip to the empire.

[56] The account of the laſt ſuppoſed celebration, though in an enlightened period of hiſtory, was ſo very doubtful and obſcure, that the alternative ſeems not doubtful. When the popiſh jubilees, the copy of the ſecular games, were invented by Boniface VIII. the crafty pope pretended, that he only revived an ancient inſtitution. See M. le Chais Lettres ſur les Jubilès.

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ſkilfully adapted to inſpire the ſuperſtitious mind with deep and ſolemn reverence. The long interval between them [57] exceeded the term of human life; and as none of the ſpectators had already ſeen them, none could flatter themſelves with the expectation of beholding them a ſecond time. The myſtic ſacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tyber; and the Campus Martius reſounded with muſic and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Slaves and ſtrangers were excluded from any participation in theſe national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-ſeven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, and whoſe parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the preſent, and for the hope of the riſing generation; requeſting, in religious hymns, that, according to the faith of their ancient oracles, they would ſtill maintain the virtue, the felicity, and the empire of the Roman people [58]. The magnificence of Philip's ſhows and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude. The devout were employed in the rites of ſuperſtition, whilſt the reflecting few revolved in their anxious minds the paſt hiſtory and the future fate of the empire.

Decline of the Roman empire.

Since Romulus, with a ſmall band of ſhepherds and outlaws, fortified himſelf on the hills near the Tiber, ten centuries had already elapſed [59]. During the four firſt ages, the Romans, in the laborious ſchool of poverty, had acquired the virtues of war and government: By the vigorous exertion of thoſe virtues, and by the aſſiſtance of fortune, they had obtained, in the courſe of the three ſucceeding

[57] Either of a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. Varro and Livy adopted the former opinion, but the infallible authority of the Sibyl conſecrated the latter (Cenſorinus de Die Natal. c. 17.). The emperors Claudius and Philip, however, did not treat the oracle with implicit reſpect.

[58] The idea of the ſecular games is beſt underſtood from the poem of Horace, and the deſcription of Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 167, &c.

[59] The received calculation of Varro aſſigns to the foundation of Rome, an æra that correſponds with the 754th year before Chriſt. But ſo little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on, in the more early ages, that Sir Iſaac Newton has brought the ſame event as low as the year 627.

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centuries, an abſolute empire over many countries of Europe, Aſia, and Africa. The laſt three hundred years had been conſumed in apparent proſperity and internal decline. The nation of ſoldiers, magiſtrates, and legiſlators, who compoſed the thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was diſſolved into the common maſs of mankind, and confounded with the millions of ſervile provincials, who had received the name, without adopting the ſpirit of Romans. A mercenary army, levied among the ſubjects and barbarians of the frontier, was the only order of men who preſerved and abuſed their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and inveſted with deſpotic power over the conqueſts and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire ſtill extended from the Weſtern Ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiſcerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no leſs powerful than Hadrian or Auguſtus had formerly been. The form was ſtill the ſame, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The induſtry of the people was diſcouraged and exhauſted by a long ſeries of oppreſſion. The diſcipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatneſs of the ſtate, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakneſs, of the emperors. The ſtrength of the frontiers, which had always conſiſted in arms rather than in fortifications, was inſenſibly undermined; and the faireſt provinces were left expoſed to the rapaciouſneſs or ambition of the barbarians, who ſoon diſcovered the decline of the Roman empire.

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Of the State of Perſia after the Reſtoration of the Monarchy by Artaxerxes.

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The barbarians of the Eaſt and of the North.

WHENEVER Tacitus indulges himſelf in thoſe beautiful epiſodes, in which he relates ſome domeſtic tranſaction of the Germans or of the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform ſcene of vice and miſery. From the reign of Auguſtus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her boſom; the tyrants, and the ſoldiers; and her proſperity had a very diſtant and feeble intereſt in the revolutions that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But when the military order had levelled, in wild anarchy, the power of the prince, the laws of the ſenate, and even the diſcipline of the camp, the barbarians of the north and of the eaſt, who had long hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long viciſſitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders eſtabliſhed themſelves in the provinces of the Roman empire. To obtain a clearer knowledge of theſe great events, we ſhall endeavour to form a previous idea of the character, forces, and deſigns of thoſe nations who avenged the cauſe of Hannibal and Mithridates.

Revolutions of Aſia.

In the more early ages of the world, whilſt the foreſt that covered Europe afforded a retreat to a few wandering ſavages, the inhabitants of Aſia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extenſive empires, the ſeat of the arts, of luxury, and

of

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of deſpotiſm. The Aſſyrians reigned over the Eaſt [1], till the ſceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropt from the hands of their enervated ſucceſſors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, and were themſelves ſwallowed up in the monarchy of the Perſians, whoſe arms could not be confined within the narrow limits of Aſia. Followed, as it is ſaid, by two millions of *men*, Xerxes, the deſcendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thouſand *ſoldiers*, under the command of Alexander, the ſon of Philip, who was intruſted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were ſufficient to ſubdue Perſia. The princes of the houſe of Seleucus uſurped and loſt the Macedonian command over the Eaſt. About the ſame time, that, by an ignominious treaty, they reſigned to the Romans the country on this ſide Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obſcure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Aſia. The formidable power of the Parthians, which ſpread from India to the frontiers of Syria, was in its turn ſubverted by Ardſhir, or Artaxerxes; the founder of a new dynaſty, which, under the name of Saſſanides, governed Perſia till the invaſion of the Arabs. This great revolution, whoſe fatal influence was ſoon experienced by the Romans, happened in the fourth year of Alexander Severus, two hundred and twenty-ſix years after the Chriſtian æra [2].

The Perſian monarchy reſtored by Artaxerxes.

Artaxerxes had ſerved with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the laſt king of the Parthians, and it appears that he was

[1] An ancient chronologiſt quoted by Velleius Paterculus (l. i. c. 6.) obſerves, that the Aſſyrians, the Medes, the Perſians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Aſia one thouſand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the acceſſion of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of theſe great events happened 289 years before Chriſt, the former may be placed 2184 years before the ſame æra. The Aſtronomical Obſervations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.

[2] In the five hundred and thirty-eighth year of the æra of Seleucus. See Agathias, l. ii. p. 63. This great event (ſuch is the careleſſneſs of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius, as high as the tenth year of Commodus, and by Moſes of Chorene, as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has ſo ſervilely copied (xxiii. 6.) his ancient materials, which are indeed very good, that he deſcribes the family of the Arſacides, as ſtill ſeated on the Perſian throne in the middle of the fourth century.

driven

driven into exile and rebellion by royal ingratitude, the cuſtomary reward for ſuperior merit. His birth was obſcure, and the obſcurity equally gave room to the aſperſions of his enemies, and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the ſcandal of the former, Artaxerxes ſprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common ſoldier[3]. The latter repreſent him, as deſcended from a branch of the ancient kings of Perſia, though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his anceſtors to the humble ſtation of private citizens[4]. As the lineal heir of the monarchy, he aſſerted his right to the throne, and challenged the noble taſk of delivering the Perſians from the oppreſſion under which they groaned above five centuries ſince the death of Darius. The Parthians were defeated in three great battles. In the laſt of theſe their king Artaban was ſlain, and the ſpirit of the nation was for ever broken[5]. The authority of Artaxerxes was ſolemnly acknowledged in a great aſſembly held at Balch in Khoraſan. Two younger branches of the royal houſe of Arſaces were confounded among the proſtrate ſatreps. A third, more mindful of ancient grandeur than of preſent neceſſity, attempted to retire, with a numerous train of vaſſals, towards their kinſman, the king of Armenia; but this little army of deſerters was intercepted, and cut off, by the vigilance of the conqueror[6], who boldly aſſumed the double diadem, and the title of King of Kings, which had been enjoyed by his predeceſſor. But theſe pompous titles, inſtead of gratifying the vanity of the Perſian, ſerved only to admoniſh him of his duty, and to inflame in his ſoul the ambition of reſtoring, in their full ſplendour, the religion and empire of Cyrus.

[3] The tanner's name was Babec; the ſoldier's, Saſſan: from the former Artaxerxes obtained the ſurname of Babegan; from the latter all his deſcendants have been ſtyled *Saſſanides*.

[4] D'Herbelot. Bibliotheque Orientale. *Ardſhir*.

[5] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxx. Herodian, l. vi. p. 207. Abulpharagius Dynaſt. p. 80.

[6] See Moſes Chorenenſis, l. ii. c. 65—71.

I. During

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Reformation of the Magian religion.

I. During the long ſervitude of Perſia under the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the nations of Europe and Aſia had mutually adopted and corrupted each other's ſuperſtitions. The Arſacides, indeed, practiſed the worſhip of the Magi; but they diſgraced and polluted it with a various mixture of foreign idolatry. The memory of Zoroaſter, the ancient prophet and philoſopher of the Perſians[7], was ſtill revered in the Eaſt; but the obſolete and myſterious language, in which the Zendavaſta was compoſed[8], opened a field of diſpute to ſeventy ſects, who variouſly explained the fundamental doctrines of their religion, and were all indifferently derided by a crowd of infidels, who rejected the divine miſſion and miracles of the prophet. To ſuppreſs the idolaters, reunite the ſchiſmatics, and confute the unbelievers, by the infallible deciſion of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes ſummoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions. Theſe prieſts, who had ſo long ſighed in contempt and obſcurity, obeyed the welcome ſummons; and on the appointed day appeared, to the number of about eighty thouſand. But as the debates of ſo tumultuous an aſſembly could not have been directed by the authority of reaſon, or influenced by the art of policy, the Perſian ſynod was reduced, by ſucceſſive operations, to forty thouſand, to four thouſand, to four hundred, to forty, and at laſt to ſeven Magi, the moſt reſpected for their learning and piety. One of theſe, Erdaviraph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren three cups of ſoporiferous wine. He drank them off, and inſtantly fell into a long

[7] Hyde and Prideaux, working up the Perſian legends and their own conjectures into a very agreeable ſtory, repreſent Zoroaſter as a contemporary of Darius Hyſtaſpes. But it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the Greek writers, who lived almoſt in the age of Darius, agree in placing the æra of Zoroaſter many hundred, or even thouſand, years before their own time. The judicious criticiſm of Mr. Moyle perceived, and maintained againſt his uncle Dr. Prideaux, the antiquity of the Perſian prophet. See his work, vol. ii.

[8] That ancient idiom was called the *Zend*. The language of the commentary, the Pehlvi, though much more modern, has ceaſed many ages ago to be a living tongue. This fact alone (if it is allowed as authentic) ſufficiently warrants the antiquity of thoſe writings, which M. d'Anquetil has brought into Europe, and tranſlated into French.

and profound ſleep. As ſoon as he waked, he related to the king and to the believing multitude, his journey to Heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was ſilenced by this ſupernatural evidence; and the articles of the faith of Zoroaſter were fixed with equal authority and preciſion [9]. A ſhort delineation of that celebrated ſyſtem will be found uſeful, not only to diſplay the character of the Perſian nation, but to illuſtrate many of their moſt important tranſactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire [10].

Perſian theology; two principles.

The great and fundamental article of the ſyſtem, was the celebrated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and injudicious attempt of Eaſtern philoſophy to reconcile the exiſtence of moral and phyſical evil, with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The firſt and original Being, in whom, or by whom, the univerſe exiſts, is denominated in the writings of Zoroaſter, *Time without bounds;* but it muſt be confeſſed, that this infinite ſubſtance ſeems rather a metaphyſical abſtraction of the mind, than a real object endowed with ſelf-conſciouſneſs, or poſſeſſed of moral perfections. From either the blind, or the intelligent operation of this infinite Time, which bears but too near an affinity with the chaos of the Greeks, the two ſecondary but active principles of the univerſe, were from all eternity produced, Ormuſd and Ahriman, each of them poſſeſſed of the powers of creation, but each diſpoſed, by his invariable nature, to exerciſe them with different deſigns. The principle of good is eternally abſorbed in light; the principle of evil eternally buried in darkneſs. The wiſe benevolence of Ormuſd formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happineſs. By his

[9] Hyde de Religione veterum Perſ. c. 21.

[10] I have principally drawn this account from the Zendaveſta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sadder, ſubjoined to Dr. Hyde's treatiſe. It muſt, however, be confeſſed, that the ſtudied obſcurity of a prophet, the figurative ſtyle of the Eaſt, and the deceitful medium of a French or Latin verſion, may have betrayed us into error and hereſy, in this abridgement of Perſian theology.

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vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the ſeaſons, and the temperate mixture of the elements, are preſerved. But the malice of Ahriman has long ſince pierced *Ormuſd's egg*; or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal irruption, the moſt minute articles of good and evil are intimately intermingled and agitated together; the rankeſt poiſons ſpring up amidſt the moſt ſalutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and conflagrations, atteſt the conflict of Nature, and the little world of man is perpetually ſhaken by vice and misfortune. Whilſt the reſt of human kind are led away captives in the chains of their infernal enemy, the faithful Perſian alone reſerves his religious adoration for his friend and protector Ormuſd, and fights under his banner of light, in the full confidence that he ſhall, in the laſt day, ſhare the glory of his triumph. At that deciſive period, the enlightened wiſdom of goodneſs will render the power of Ormuſd ſuperior to the furious malice of his rival. Ahriman and his followers, diſarmed and ſubdued, will ſink into their native darkneſs: and virtue will maintain the eternal peace and harmony of the univerſe [11].

Religious worſhip.

The theology of Zoroaſter was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his diſciples; but the moſt careleſs obſervers were ſtruck with the philoſophic ſimplicity of the Perſian worſhip. "That people, ſays Herodotus [12], rejects the "uſe of temples, of altars, and of ſtatues, and ſmiles at the folly of "thoſe nations, who imagine that the gods are ſprung from, "or bear any affinity with, the human nature. The tops of the "higheſt mountains are the places choſen for ſacrifices. Hymns

[11] The modern Perſees (and in ſome degree the Sadder) exalt Ormuſd into the firſt and omnipotent cauſe, whilſt they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious ſpirit. Their deſire of pleaſing the Mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological ſyſtem.

[12] Herodotus, l. i. c. 131. But Dr. Prideaux thinks, with reaſon, that the uſe of temples was afterwards permitted in the Magian religion.

" and prayers are the principal worſhip; the Supreme God who " fills the wide circle of Heaven, is the object to whom they are " addreſſed." Yet, at the ſame time, in the true ſpirit of a polytheiſt, he accuſes them of adoring Earth, Water, Fire, the Winds, and the Sun and Moon. But the Perſians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct, which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly Fire, Light, and the Sun, whom they called Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, becauſe they conſidered them as the pureſt ſymbols, the nobleſt productions, and the moſt powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature [13].

Ceremonies and moral precepts.

Every mode of religion, to make a deep and laſting impreſſion on the human mind, muſt exerciſe our obedience, by enjoining practices of devotion, for which we can aſſign no reaſon; and muſt acquire our eſteem, by inculcating moral duties analogous to the dictates of our own hearts. The religion of Zoroaſter was abundantly provided with the former, and poſſeſſed a ſufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty, the faithful Perſian was inveſted with a myſterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment, all the actions of his life, even the moſt indifferent, or the moſt neceſſary, were ſanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omiſſion of which, under any circumſtances, was a grievous ſin, not inferior in guilt to the violation of the moral duties. The moral duties, however, of juſtice, mercy, liberality, &c. were in their turn required of the diſciple of Zoroaſter, who wiſhed to eſcape the perſecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormuſd in a bliſsful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety [14].

But

[13] Hyde de Relig. Perſ. c. 8. Notwithſtanding all their diſtinctions and proteſtations, which ſeem ſincere enough, their tyrants, the Mahometans, have conſtantly ſtigmatiſed them, as idolatrous worſhippers of the Fire.

[14] See the Sadder, the ſmalleſt part of which conſiſts of moral precepts. The ceremonies

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Encouragement of agriculture.

But there are ſome remarkable inſtances, in which Zoroaſter lays aſide the prophet, aſſumes the legiſlator, and diſcovers a liberal concern for private and public happineſs, ſeldom to be found among the groveling or viſionary ſchemes of ſuperſtition. Faſting and celibacy, the common means of purchaſing the Divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal rejection of the beſt gifts of Providence. The ſaint, in the Magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant uſeful trees, to deſtroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Perſia, and to work out his ſalvation by purſuing all the labours of agriculture. We may quote from the Zendaveſta a wiſe and benevolent maxim, which compenſates for many an abſurdity. "He who ſows the ground with "care and diligence, acquires a greater ſtock of religious merit, than "he could gain by the repetition of ten thouſand prayers[15]." In the ſpring of every year a feſtival was celebrated, deſtined to repreſent the primitive equality, and the preſent connexion, of mankind. The ſtately kings of Perſia, exchanging their vain pomp for more genuine greatneſs, freely mingled with the humbleſt but moſt uſeful of their ſubjects. On that day the huſbandmen were admitted, without diſtinction, to the table of the king and his ſatraps. The monarch accepted their petitions, inquired into their grievances, and converſed with them on the moſt equal terms. "From your labours, was he accuſtomed to ſay (and to ſay with "truth, if not with ſincerity), from your labours, we receive our "ſubſiſtence; you derive your tranquillity from our vigilance; ſince, "therefore, we are mutually neceſſary to each other, let us live "together like brothers in concord and love[16]." Such a feſtival muſt indeed have degenerated, in a wealthy and deſpotic empire,

monies enjoined are infinite and trifling. Fifteen genuflexions, prayers, &c. were required whenever the devout Perſian cut his nails or made water; or as often as he put on the ſacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14. 50. 60.

[15] Zendaveſta, tom. i. p. 224. and Preciſ du Syſteme de Zoroaſtre, tom. iii.

[16] Hyde de Religione Perſarum, c. 19.

into a theatrical repreſentation; but it was at leaſt a comedy well worthy of a royal audience, and which might ſometimes imprint a ſalutary leſſon on the mind of a young prince.

Power of the Magi.

Had Zoroaſter, in all his inſtitutions, invariably ſupported this exalted character, his name would deſerve a place with thoſe of Numa and Confucius, and his ſyſtem would be juſtly entitled to all the applauſe, which it has pleaſed ſome of our Divines, and even ſome of our philoſophers, to beſtow on it. But in that motley compoſition, dictated by reaſon and paſſion, by enthuſiaſm and by ſelfiſh motives, ſome uſeful and ſublime truths were diſgraced by a mixture of the moſt abject and dangerous ſuperſtition. The Magi, or ſacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, ſince, as we have already ſeen, fourſcore thouſand of them were convened in a general council. Their forces were multiplied by diſcipline. A regular hierarchy was diffuſed through all the provinces of Perſia; and the Archimagus, who reſided at Balch, was reſpected as the viſible head of the church, and the lawful ſucceſſor of Zoroaſter [17]. The property of the Magi was very conſiderable. Beſides the leſs invidious poſſeſſion of a large tract of the moſt fertile lands of Media [18], they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the induſtry of the Perſians [19]. "Though your good works," ſays the intereſted prophet, "exceed "in number the leaves of the trees, the drops of rain, the ſtars in "the heaven, or the ſands on the ſea-ſhore, they will all be un- "profitable to you, unleſs they are accepted by the *deſtour*, or prieſt. "To obtain the acceptation of this guide to ſalvation, you muſt

[17] Hyde de Religione Perſarum, c. 28. Both Hyde and Prideaux affect to apply to the Magian, the terms conſecrated to the Chriſtian hierarchy.

[18] Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two curious particulars; 1. that the Magi derived ſome of their moſt ſecret doctrines from the Indian Brachmans; and, 2. that they were a tribe or family, as well as order.

[19] The divine inſtitution of tythes exhibits a ſingular inſtance of conformity between the law of Zoroaſter and that of Moſes. Thoſe who cannot otherwiſe account for it, may ſuppoſe, if they pleaſe, that the Magi of the latter times inſerted ſo uſeful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet.

"faithfully

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" faithfully pay him *tythes* of all you poſſeſs, of your goods, of " your lands, and of your money. If the deſtour be ſatisfied, your " ſoul will eſcape hell tortures; you will ſecure praiſe in this world, " and happineſs in the next. For the deſtours are the teachers of " religion; they know all things, and they deliver all men [20]."

Theſe convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtleſs imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth; ſince the Magi were the maſters of education in Perſia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intruſted [21]. The Perſian prieſts, who were of a ſpeculative genius, preſerved and inveſtigated the ſecrets of Oriental philoſophy; and acquired, either by ſuperior knowledge or ſuperior art, the reputation of being well verſed in ſome occult ſciences, which have derived their appellation from the Magi [22]. Thoſe of more active diſpoſitions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is obſerved, that the adminiſtration of Artaxerxes was in a great meaſure directed by the counſels of the ſacerdotal order, whoſe dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince reſtored to its ancient ſplendour [23].

Spirit of perſecution.

The firſt counſel of the Magi was agreeable to the unſociable genius of their faith [24], to the practice of ancient kings [25], and even to the example of their legiſlator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war, excited by his own intolerant zeal [26]. By an edict of Artaxerxes, the exerciſe of every worſhip, except that of Zoroaſter, was ſeverely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians, and the ſta-

[20] Sadder, Art. 8.

[21] Plato in Alcibiad.

[22] Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. xxx. c. 1.) obſerves, that magic held mankind by the triple chain of religion, of phyſic, and of aſtronomy.

[23] Agathias, l. iv. p. 134.

[24] Mr. Hume, in the Natural Hiſtory of Religion, ſagaciouſly remarks, that the moſt refined and philoſophic ſects are conſtantly the moſt intolerant.

[25] Cicero de Legibus, ii. 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the Magi, deſtroyed the temples of Greece.

[26] Hyde de Rel. Perſar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot Bibliothéque Orientale *Zerduſht*. Life of Zoroaſter in tom. ii. of the Zendaveſta.

tues

tues of their deified monarchs, were thrown down with ignominy [27]. The ſword of Ariſtotle (ſuch was the name given by the Orientals to the polytheiſm and philoſophy of the Greeks) was eaſily broken [28]; the flames of perſecution ſoon reached the more ſtubborn Jews and Chriſtians [29]; nor did they ſpare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majeſty of Ormuſd, who was jealous of a rival, was ſeconded by the deſpotiſm of Artaxerxes, who could not ſuffer a rebel; and the ſchiſmatics within his vaſt empire were ſoon reduced to the inconſiderable number of eighty thouſand [30]. This ſpirit of perſecution reflects diſhonour on the religion of Zoroaſter; but as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it ſerved to ſtrengthen the new monarchy, by uniting all the various inhabitants of Perſia in the bands of religious zeal.

Eſtabliſhment of the royal authority in the provinces.

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wreſted the ſceptre of the Eaſt from the ancient royal family of Parthia. There ſtill remained the more difficult taſk of eſtabliſhing, throughout the vaſt extent of Perſia, a uniform and vigorous adminiſtration. The weak indulgence of the Arſacides, had reſigned to their ſons and brothers the principal provinces, and the greateſt offices of the kingdom, in the nature of hereditary poſſeſſions. The *vitaxæ*, or eighteen moſt powerful ſatraps, were permitted to aſſume the regal title; and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over ſo many vaſſal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Aſia [31], within their

[27] Compare Moſes of Chorene, l. ii. c. 74. with Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. Hereafter I ſhall make uſe of theſe paſſages.

[28] Rabbi Abraham in the Tarikh Schickard, p. 108, 109.

[29] Baſnage Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. viii. c. 3. Sozomen, l. ii. c. 1. Manes, who ſuffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a Magian, as well as a Chriſtian heretic.

[30] Hyde de Religione Perſar. c. 21.

[32] Theſe colonies were extremely numerous. Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-nine cities, all named from himſelf, or ſome of his relations (ſee Appian in Syriac. p. 124.). The æra of Seleucus (ſtill in uſe among the Eaſtern Chriſtians) appears as late as the year 508, of Chriſt 196, on the medals of the Greek cities within the Parthian empire. See Moyle's works, vol. i. p. 273, &c. and M. Freret, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xix.

walls,

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walls, ſcarcely acknowledged, or ſeldom obeyed, any ſuperior; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal ſyſtem [32] which has ſince prevailed in Europe. But the active victor, at the head of a numerous and diſciplined army, viſited in perſon every province of Perſia. The defeat of the boldeſt rebels, and the reduction of the ſtrongeſt fortifications [33], diffuſed the terror of his arms, and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obſtinate reſiſtance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity [34]. A cheerful ſubmiſſion was rewarded with honours and riches; but the prudent Artaxerxes, ſuffering no perſon except himſelf to aſſume the title of king, aboliſhed every intermediate power between the throne and the people.

Extent and population of Perſia.

His kingdom, nearly equal in extent to modern Perſia, was, on every ſide, bounded by the ſea or by great rivers; by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus, by the Caſpian Sea, and the Gulph of Perſia [35]. That country was computed to contain, in the laſt century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, ſixty thouſand villages, and about forty millions of ſouls [36]. If we compare the

[32] The modern Perſians diſtinguiſh that period as the dynaſty of the kings of the nations. See Plin. Hiſt. Nat. vi. 25.

[33] Eutychius (tom. i. p. 367. 371. 375.) relates the ſiege of the iſland of Meſene in the Tigris, with ſome circumſtances not unlike the ſtory of Niſus and Scylla.

[34] Agathias, ii. 164. The princes of Segeſtan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally tranſport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impoſſible, that the fabulous exploits of Ruſtan prince of Segeſtan may have been grafted on this real hiſtory.

[35] We can ſcarcely attribute to the Perſian monarchy the ſea coaſt of Gedroſia or Macran, which extends along the Indian Ocean from Cape Jaſk (the promontory Capella) to Cape Goadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a ſavage people of Icthyophagi, or Fiſhermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no maſter, and who were divided by inhoſpitable deſerts from the reſt of the world. (See Arrian de Reb. Indicis.) In the twelfth century, the little town of Taiz (ſuppoſed by M. d'Anville to be the Teſa of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched by the reſort of the Arabian merchants. (See Geographie Nubiens, p. 58, and d'Anville Geographie Ancienne, tom. ii. p. 283.) In the laſt age the whole country was divided between three princes, one Mahometan and two Idolaters, who maintained their independence againſt the ſucceſſors of Shaw Abbas. (Voyages de Tavernier, part i. l. v. p. 635.)

[36] Chardin, tom. iii. c. 1, 2, 3.

admi-

adminiſtration of the houſe of Saſſan with that of the houſe of Seſi, the political influence of the Magian with that of the Mahometan religion, we ſhall probably infer, that the kingdom of Artaxerxes contained at leaſt as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it muſt likewiſe be confeſſed, that in every age the want of harbours on the ſea-coaſt, and the ſcarcity of freſh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Perſians; who, in the calculation of their numbers, ſeem to have indulged one of the meaneſt, though moſt common, artifices of national vanity.

Recapitulation of the war between the Parthian and Roman empire.

As ſoon as the ambitious mind of Artaxerxes had triumphed over the reſiſtance of his vaſſals, he began to threaten the neighbouring ſtates, who, during the long ſlumber of his predeceſſors, had inſulted Perſia with impunity. He obtained ſome eaſy victories over the wild Scythians and the effeminate Indians; but the Romans were an enemy, who, by their paſt injuries and preſent power, deſerved the utmoſt efforts of his arms. A forty years tranquillity, the fruit of valour and moderation, had ſucceeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapſed from the acceſſion of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in war; and although the whole ſtrength of the Arſacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was moſt commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious ſituation, and puſillanimous temper, purchaſed a peace at the expence of near two millions of our money [37]; but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his ſon, erected many trophies in Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have unſeaſonably interrupted the more important ſeries of domeſtic revolutions, we ſhall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Cteſiphon.

[37] Dion, l. xxviii. p. 1335.

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Cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia [38]. Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony, arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of six hundred thousand citizens; the walls were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian: but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony [39]. The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors; and the Imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia [40]. The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city [41]. Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Se-
A. D. 165. leucia. They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings; yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inha-

[38] For the precise situation of Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Modain, and Bagdad, cities often confounded with each other; see an excellent Geographical Tract of M. d'Anville, in Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xxx.

[39] Tacit. Annal. xi. 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 26.

[40] This may be inferred from Strabo, l. xvi. p. 743.

[41] That most curious traveller Bernier, who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Dehli to Cashmir, describes with great accuracy the immense moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of 35,000 men, that of infantry of 10,000. It was computed that the camp contained 150,000 horses, mules, and elephants; 50,000 camels; 50,000 oxen, and between 300,000 and 400,000 persons. Almost all Dehli followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry.

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bitants, tarniſhed the glory of the Roman triumph [42]. Seleucia, already exhauſted by the neighbourhood of a too powerful rival, ſunk under the fatal blow; but Cteſiphon, in about thirty-three years, had ſufficiently recovered its ſtrength to maintain an obſtinate ſiege againſt the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by aſſault; the king, who defended it in perſon, eſcaped with precipitation; an hundred thouſand captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman ſoldiers [43]. Notwithſtanding theſe misfortunes, Cteſiphon ſucceeded to Babylon and to Seleucia, as one of the great capitals of the Eaſt. In ſummer, the monarch of Perſia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildneſs of the climate engaged him to prefer Cteſiphon for his winter-reſidence. A. D. 198.

Conqueſt of Oſrhoene by the Romans.

From theſe ſucceſsful inroads, the Romans derived no real or laſting benefit; nor did they attempt to preſerve ſuch diſtant conqueſts, ſeparated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate deſert. The reduction of the kingdom of Oſrhoene, was an acquiſition of leſs ſplendour indeed, but of a far more ſolid advantage. That little ſtate occupied the northern and moſt fertile part of Meſopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edeſſa, its capital, was ſituated about twenty miles beyond the former of thoſe rivers; and the inhabitants, ſince the time of Alexander, were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians [44]. The feeble ſovereigns of Oſrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Par-

[42] Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1178. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 38. Eutrop. viii. 10. Euſeb. in Chronic. Quadratus (quoted in the Auguſtan Hiſtory) attempted to vindicate the Romans, by alleging, that the citizens of Seleucia had firſt violated their faith.

[43] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1263. Herodian, l. iii. p. 120. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 70.

[44] The poliſhed citizens of Antioch, called thoſe of Edeſſa mixed barbarians. It was, however, ſome praiſe, that of the three dialects of the Syriac, the pureſt and moſt elegant (the Aramæan) was ſpoke at Edeſſa. This remark M. Bayer (Hiſt. Edeſſ. p. 5.) has borrowed from George of Malatia, a Syrian writer.

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thian cauſe; but the ſuperior power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is ſtill atteſted by their medals. After the concluſion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to ſecure ſome ſubſtantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were conſtructed in ſeveral parts of the country, and a Roman garriſon was fixed in the ſtrong town of Niſibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Oſrhoene attempted to ſhake off the yoke: but the ſtern of policy of Severus confirmed their dependance [45], and the perfidy of Caracalla com-

A. D. 216. pleted the eaſy conqueſt. Abgarus, the laſt king of Edeſſa, was ſent in chains to Rome, his dominions reduced into a province, and his capital dignified with the rank of colony; and thus the Romans, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy, obtained a firm and permanent eſtabliſhment beyond the Euphrates [46].

Artaxerxes claims the provinces of Aſia, and declares war againſt the Romans. A. D. 230.

Prudence as well as glory might have juſtified a war on the ſide of Artaxerxes, had his views been confined to the defence or the acquiſition of a uſeful frontier. But the ambitious Perſian openly avowed a far more extenſive deſign of conqueſt; and he thought himſelf able to ſupport his lofty pretenſions by the arms of reaſon as well as by thoſe of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had firſt ſubdued, and his ſucceſſors had for a long time poſſeſſed, the whole extent of Aſia, as far as the Propontis and the Ægæan Sea; the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Perſian ſatraps, and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their ſovereignty [47]. Their rights had been ſuſpended, but not deſtroyed, by a long uſurpation; and as ſoon as he received the Perſian dia-

[45] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1248, 1249, 1250. M. Bayer has neglected to uſe this moſt important paſſage.

[46] This kingdom, from Oſrhoes, who gave a new name to the country, to the laſt Abgarus, had laſted 353 years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, Hiſtoria Oſrhoena et Edeſſena.

[47] Xenophon, in the preface to the Cyropædia, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. iii. c. 79, &c.) enters into a curious and particular deſcription of the twenty great *Satrapies* into which the Perſian empire was divided by Darius Hyſtaſpes.

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dem, which birth and ſucceſsful valour had placed upon his head, the firſt great duty of his ſtation called upon him to reſtore the ancient limits and ſplendour of the monarchy. The Great King, therefore (ſuch was the haughty ſtyle of his embaſſies to the emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans inſtantly to depart from all the provinces of his anceſtors, and, yielding to the Perſians the empire of Aſia, to content themſelves with the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered by four hundred of the talleſt and moſt beautiful of the Perſians; who, by their fine horſes, ſplendid arms, and rich apparel, diſplayed the pride and greatneſs of their maſter [48]. Such an embaſſy was much leſs an offer of negociation than a declaration of war. Both Alexander Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military force of the Roman and Perſian monarchies, reſolved in this important conteſt to lead their armies in perſon.

Pretended victory of Alexander Severus. A. D. 233.

If we credit what ſhould ſeem the moſt authentic of all records, an oration, ſtill extant, and delivered by the emperor himſelf to the ſenate, we muſt allow that the victory of Alexander Severus was not inferior to any of thoſe formerly obtained over the Perſians by the ſon of Philip. The army of the Great King conſiſted of one hundred and twenty thouſand horſe, clothed in complete armour of ſteel; of ſeven hundred elephants, with towers filled with archers on their backs, and of eighteen hundred chariots, armed with ſcythes. This formidable hoſt, the like of which is not to be found in eaſtern hiſtory, and has ſcarcely been imagined in eaſtern romance [49], was

[48] Herodian, vi. 209. 212.

[49] There were two hundred ſcythed chariots at the battle of Arbela, in the hoſt of Darius. In the vaſt army of Tigranes, which was vanquiſhed by Lucullus, ſeventeen thouſand horſe only were completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field againſt the Romans: by his frequent wars and negociations with the princes of India, he had once collected an hundred and fifty of thoſe great animals; but it may be queſtioned, whether the moſt powerful monarch of Hindoſtan ever formed a line of battle of ſeven hundred elephants. Inſtead of three or four thouſand elephants, which the Great Mogul was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs, Tavernier

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was diſcomfited in a great battle, in which the Roman Alexander approved himſelf an intrepid ſoldier and a ſkilful general. The Great King fled before his valour; an immenſe booty, and the conqueſt of Meſopotamia, were the immediate fruits of this ſignal victory. Such are the circumſtances of this oſtentatious and improbable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears, by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the unblushing ſervility of his flatterers, and received without contradiction by a diſtant and obſequious ſenate[50]. Far from being inclined to believe that the arms of Alexander obtained any memorable advantage over the Perſians, we are induced to ſuſpect, that all this blaze of imaginary glory was deſigned to conceal ſome real diſgrace.

More probable account of the war.

Our ſuſpicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary hiſtorian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with reſpect, and his faults with candour. He deſcribes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war. Three Roman armies were deſtined to invade Perſia at the ſame time, and by different roads. But the operations of the campaign, though wiſely concerted, were not executed either with ability or ſucceſs. The firſt of theſe armies, as ſoon as it had entered the marſhy plains of Babylon, towards the artificial conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris[51], was encompaſſed by the ſuperior numbers, and deſtroyed by the arrows, of the enemy. The alliance of Choſroes king of

nier (Voyages, part ii. l. i. p. 198.) diſcovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety for the ſervice of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field: but Quintus Curtius (viii. 13.), in this inſtance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, diſtinguiſhed by their ſize and ſtrength. In Siam, where theſe animals are the moſt numerous and the moſt eſteemed, eighteen elephants are allowed as a ſufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a juſt army is divided. The whole number, of one hundred and ſixty-two elephants of war, may ſometimes be doubled. Hiſt. des Voyages, tom. ix. p. 260.

[50] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 133.

[51] M. de Tillemont has already obſerved, that Herodian's geography is ſomewhat confuſed.

Armenia,

Armenia [52], and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Perſian cavalry was of little ſervice, opened a ſecure entrance into the heart of Media, to the ſecond of the Roman armies. Theſe brave troops laid waſte the adjacent provinces, and by ſeveral ſucceſsful actions againſt Artaxerxes, gave a faint colour to the emperor's vanity. But the retreat of this victorious army was imprudent, or at leaſt unfortunate. In repaſſing the mountains, great numbers of ſoldiers periſhed by the badneſs of the roads and the ſeverity of the winter ſeaſon. It had been reſolved, that whilſt theſe two great detachments penetrated into the oppoſite extremes of the Perſian dominions, the main body, under the command of Alexander himſelf, ſhould ſupport their attack, by invading the centre of the kingdom. But the unexperienced youth, influenced by his mother's counſels, and perhaps by his own fears, deſerted the braveſt troops and the faireſt proſpect of victory; and after conſuming in Meſopotamia an inactive and inglorious ſummer, he led back to Antioch an army diminiſhed by ſickneſs, and provoked by diſappointment. The behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different. Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to the marſhes of the Euphrates, he had every where oppoſed the invaders in perſon; and in either fortune, had united with the ableſt conduct the moſt undaunted reſolution. But in ſeveral obſtinate engagements againſt the veteran legions of Rome, the Perſian monarch had loſt the flower of his troops. Even his victories had weakened his power. The favourable opportunities of the abſence of Alexander, and of the confuſions that followed that emperor's death, preſented themſelves in vain to his ambition. Inſtead of expelling the Romans, as he pretended, from the continent of Aſia, he found himſelf

[52] Moſes of Chorene (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 71.), illuſtrates this invaſion of Media, by aſſerting that Choſroes, king of Armenia, defeated Artaxerxes, and purſued him to the confines of India. The exploits of Choſroes have been magnified; and he acted as a dependant ally to the Romans.

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unable to wreſt from their hands the little province of Meſopotamia [53].

Character and maxims of Artaxerxes. A. D. 240.

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the laſt defeat of the Parthians laſted only fourteen years, forms a memorable æra in the hiſtory of the Eaſt, and even in that of Rome. His character ſeems to have been marked by thoſe bold and commanding features, that generally diſtinguiſh the princes who conquer, from thoſe who inherit, an empire. Till the laſt period of the Perſian monarchy, his code of laws was reſpected as the ground-work of their civil and religious policy [54]. Several of his ſayings are preſerved. One of them in particular diſcovers a deep inſight into the conſtitution of government. "The authority of the prince," ſaid Artaxerxes, "muſt "be defended by a military force; that force can only be main-"tained by taxes; all taxes muſt, at laſt, fall upon agriculture; and "agriculture can never flouriſh except under the protection of "juſtice and moderation [55]." Artaxerxes bequeathed his new empire, and his ambitious deſigns againſt the Romans, to Sapor, a ſon not unworthy of his great father; but thoſe deſigns were too extenſive for the power of Perſia, and ſerved only to involve both nations in a long ſeries of deſtructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

Military power of the Perſians.

The Perſians, long ſince civilized and corrupted, were very far from poſſeſſing the martial independence, and the intrepid hardineſs, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians maſters of the world. The ſcience of war, that conſtituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any conſiderable progreſs in the Eaſt. Thoſe

[53] For the account of this war, ſee Herodian, l. vi. p. 209. 212. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[54] Eutychius, tom. ii. p. 180. verſ. Pocock. The great Choſroes Nouſhirwan ſent the Code of Artaxerxes to all his Satraps, as the invariable rule of their conduct.

[55] D'Herbelot Bibliotheque Orientale, au mot *Ardſhir*. We may obſerve, that after an ancient period of fables, and a long interval of darkneſs, the modern hiſtories of Perſia begin to aſſume an air of truth with the dynaſty of the Saſſanides.

diſciplined evolutions which harmonize and animate a confuſed multitude, were unknown to the Perſians. They were equally unſkilled in the arts of conſtructing, beſieging, or defending regular fortifications. They truſted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their diſcipline. The infantry was a half-armed ſpiritleſs crowd of peaſants, levied in haſte by the allurements of plunder, and as eaſily diſperſed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles tranſported into the camp the pride and luxury of the ſeraglio. Their military operations were impeded by a uſeleſs train of women, eunuchs, horſes, and camels, and in the midſt of a ſucceſsful campaign, the Perſian hoſt was often ſeparated or deſtroyed by an unexpected famine[56].

Their infantry contemptible.

But the nobles of Perſia, in the boſom of luxury and deſpotiſm, preſerved a ſtrong ſenſe of perſonal gallantry and national honour. From the age of ſeven years they were taught to ſpeak truth, to ſhoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was univerſally confeſſed, that in the two laſt of theſe arts, they had made a more than common proficiency[57]. The moſt diſtinguiſhed youth were educated under the monarch's eye, practiſed their exerciſes in the gate of his palace, and were ſeverely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience, in their long and laborious parties of hunting. In every province, the ſatrap maintained a like ſchool of military virtue. The Perſian nobles (ſo natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received from the king's bounty lands and houſes, on the condition of their ſervice in war. They were ready on the firſt ſummons to mount on horſeback, with a martial and ſplendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully ſelected from among the moſt robuſt ſlaves, and the braveſt ad-

Their cavalry excellent.

[56] Herodian, l. vi. p. 214. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxiii. c. 6. Some differences may be obſerved between the two hiſtorians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half.

[57] The Perſians are ſtill the moſt ſkilful horſemen, and their horſes the fineſt, in the Eaſt.

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venturers of Aſia. Theſe armies, both of light and of heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuoſity of their charge, and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eaſtern provinces of the declining empire of Rome[58].

[58] From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin, &c. I have extracted ſuch *probable* accounts of the Perſian nobility, as ſeem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Saſſanides.

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The State of Germany till the Invaſion of the Barbarians, in the Time of the Emperor Decius.

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THE government and religion of Perſia have deſerved ſome notice from their connexion with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We ſhall occaſionally mention the Scythian, or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horſes, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immenſe plains which ſpread themſelves from the Caſpian Sea to the Viſtula, from the confines of Perſia to thoſe of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who firſt reſiſted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the weſtern monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this hiſtory, and poſſeſs a ſtronger, and, if we may uſe the expreſſion, a more domeſtic, claim to our attention and regard. The moſt civilized nations of modern Europe iſſued from the woods of Germany, and in the rude inſtitutions of thoſe barbarians we may ſtill diſtinguiſh the original principles of our preſent laws and manners. In their primitive ſtate of ſimplicity and independence, the Germans were ſurveyed by the diſcerning eye, and delineated by the maſterly pencil, of Tacitus, the firſt of hiſtorians who applied the ſcience of philoſophy to the ſtudy of facts. The expreſſive conciſeneſs of his deſcriptions has deſerved to exerciſe the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to exercite the genius and penetration of the philoſophic hiſtorians of our own times. The ſubject, however various and important, has already been ſo frequently, ſo ably, and ſo ſucceſsfully diſcuſſed, that it is now

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grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We ſhall therefore content ourſelves with obſerving, and indeed with repeating, ſome of the moſt important circumſtances of climate, of manners, and of inſtitutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany ſuch formidable enemies to the Roman power.

Extent of Germany.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province weſtward of the Rhine, which had ſubmitted to the Roman yoke, extended itſelf over a third part of Europe. Almoſt the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Pruſſia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whoſe complexion, manners, and language, denoted a common origin, and preſerved a ſtriking reſemblance. On the weſt, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the ſouth, by the Danube, from the Illyrian, provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, riſing from the Danube, and called the Carpathian Mountains, covered Germany on the ſide of Dacia or Hungary. The eaſtern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations. In the remote darkneſs of the north, the ancients imperfectly deſcried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic Sea, and beyond the Peninſula, or iſlands [1] of Scandinavia.

Climate.

Some ingenious writers [2] have ſuſpected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at preſent; and the moſt ancient deſcriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm

[1] The modern philoſophers of Sweden ſeem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually ſink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to eſtimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia muſt have been covered by the ſea; while the high lands roſe above the waters, as ſo many iſlands of various forms and dimenſions. Such indeed is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vaſt countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliotheque Raiſonnée, tom. xl. and xlv. a large abſtract of Dalin's Hiſtory of Sweden, compoſed in the Swediſh language.

[2] In particular, Mr. Hume, the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, Hiſt. des Celtes, tom. i.

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their theory. The general complaints of intenſe froſt, and eternal winter, are perhaps little to be regarded, ſince we have no method of reducing to the accurate ſtandard of the thermometer, the feelings, or the expreſſions of an orator, born in the happier regions of Greece or Aſia. But I ſhall ſelect two remarkable circumſtances of a leſs equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of ſupporting the moſt enormous weights. The barbarians, who often choſe that ſevere ſeaſon for their inroads, tranſported, without apprehenſion or danger, their numerous armies, their cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vaſt and ſolid bridge of ice[3]. Modern ages have not preſented an inſtance of a like phænomenon. 2. The rein deer, that uſeful animal, from whom the ſavage of the North derives the beſt comforts of his dreary life, is of a conſtitution that ſupports, and even requires, the moſt intenſe cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the Pole; he ſeems to delight in the ſnows of Lapland and Siberia; but at preſent he cannot ſubſiſt, much leſs multiply, in any country to the ſouth of the Baltic[4]. In the time of Cæſar, the rein deer, as well as the elk, and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian foreſt, which then overſhadowed a great part of Germany and Poland[5]. The modern improvements ſufficiently explain the cauſes of the diminution of the cold. Theſe immenſe woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays

[3] Diodorus Siculus, l. v. p. 340. Edit. Weſſel. Herodian, l. vi. p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *fruſta vini*. Ovid. Epiſt ex Ponto, l. iv. 7. 9, 10. Virgil. Georgic. l. iii. 355. The fact is confirmed by a ſoldier and a philoſopher, who had experienced the intenſe cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabaſis, l. vii. p. 560. Edit. Hutchinſon.

[4] Buffon Hiſtoire Naturelle, tom. xii. p. 79. 116.

[5] Cæſar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 23, &c. The moſt inquiſitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmoſt limits, although ſome of them had travelled in it more than ſixty days journey.

of

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of the ſun[6]. The moraſſes have been drained, and, in proportion as the ſoil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although ſituated in the ſame parallel with the fineſt provinces of France and England, that country experiences the moſt rigorous cold. The rein deer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and laſting ſnow, and the great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a ſeaſon when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are uſually free from ice[7].

Its effects on the natives.

It is difficult to aſcertain, and eaſy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have ſuppoſed, and moſt have allowed, though, as it ſhould ſeem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the North was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human ſpecies more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climates[8]. We may aſſert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and maſculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty ſtature than the people of the South[9], gave them a kind of ſtrength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inſpired them with conſtitutional bravery, which is the reſult of nerves and ſpirits. The ſeverity of a winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was ſcarcely felt by theſe hardy children of the North[10], who, in their turn, were unable to reſiſt the ſummer heats,

[6] Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 47.) inveſtigates the ſmall and ſcattered remains of the Hercynian wood.

[7] Charlevoix Hiſtoire du Canada.

[8] Olaus Rudbeck aſſerts that the Swediſh women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be ſuſpected.

[9] In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excreſcunt. Tacit. Germania, 3. 20. Cluver. l. i. c. 14.

[10] Plutarch. in Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amuſement, often ſlid down mountains of ſnow on their broad ſhields.

and diſſolved away in languor and ſickneſs under the beams of an Italian ſun[11].

Origin of the Germans.

There is not any where upon the globe, a large tract of country, which we have diſcovered deſtitute of inhabitants, or whoſe firſt population can be fixed with any degree of hiſtorical certainty. And yet, as the moſt philoſophic minds can ſeldom refrain from inveſtigating the infancy of great nations, our curioſity conſumes itſelf in toilſome and diſappointed efforts. When Tacitus conſidered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aſpect of the country, he was diſpoſed to pronounce thoſe barbarians *Indigenæ*, or natives of the ſoil. We may allow with ſafety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies, already formed into a political ſociety[12]; but that the name and nation received their exiſtence from the gradual union of ſome wandering ſavages of the Hercynian woods. To aſſert thoſe ſavages to have been the ſpontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited, would be a raſh inference, condemned by religion, and unwarranted by reaſon.

Fables and conjectures.

Such rational doubt is but ill-ſuited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Moſaic hiſtory of the world, the ark of Noah has been of the ſame uſe, as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the ſiege of Troy. On a narrow baſis of acknowledged truth, an immenſe but rude ſuperſtructure of fable has been erected; and the wild Iriſhman[13], as well as the wild Tartar,

[11] The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent diſcipline were in a great meaſure preſerved in health and vigour. It may be remarked, that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog ſeems to approach the neareſt to our ſpecies in that privilege.

[12] Tacit. German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the courſe of the Danube, and diſcharged itſelf on Greece and Aſia. Tacitus could diſcover only one inconſiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin.

[13] According to Dr. Keating (Hiſtory of Ireland, p. 13, 14.), the giant Partholanus, who was the ſon of Seara, the ſon of Eſra, the ſon of Sru, the ſon of Framant, the ſon of

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Tartar[14], could point out the individual ſon of Japhet, from whoſe loins his anceſtors were lineally deſcended. The laſt century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and eaſy faith, who, by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great grandchildren of Noah from the Tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of theſe judicious critics, one of the moſt entertaining was Olaus Rudbeck, profeſſor in the univerſity of Upſal[15]. Whatever is celebrated either in hiſtory or fable, this zealous patriot aſcribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed ſo conſiderable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themſelves derived their alphabetical characters, their aſtronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for ſuch it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Heſperides, the Fortunate Iſlands, and even the Elyſian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect tranſcripts. A clime ſo profuſely favoured by Nature, could not long remain deſert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thouſand perſons. He then diſperſes them into ſmall colonies to repleniſh the earth, and to propagate the human ſpecies. The German or Swediſh detachment (which marched, if I am not miſtaken, under the command of Aſkenaz the ſon of Gomer, the ſon of Japhet) diſtinguiſhed itſelf by a more than common diligence in the proſecution of this great work. The northern hive caſt its ſwarms over the greateſt part of Europe, Africa, and Aſia;

of Fathaclan, the ſon of Magog, the ſon of Japhet, the ſon of Noah, landed on the coaſt of Munſter, the 14th day of May, in the year of the world one thouſand nine hundred and ſeventy-eight. Though he ſucceeded in his great enterpriſe, the looſe behaviour of his wife rendered his domeſtic life very unhappy, and provoked him to ſuch a degree, that he killed—her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned hiſtorian very properly obſerves, was the *firſt* inſtance of female falſehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.

[14] Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan.

[15] His work, entitled Atlantica, is uncommonly ſcarce. Bayle has given two moſt curious extracts from it. Republique des Lettres Janvier et Fevrier, 1685.

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and (to uſe the author's metaphor) the blood circulated from the extremities to the heart.

The Germans ignorant of letters;

But all this well-laboured ſyſtem of German antiquities is annihilated by a ſingle fact, too well atteſted to admit of any doubt, and of too deciſive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the uſe of letters[16]; and the uſe of letters is the principal circumſtance that diſtinguiſhes a civilized people from a herd of ſavages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory ſoon diſſipates or corrupts the ideas intruſted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer ſupplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgement becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved ſociety, to calculate the immenſe diſtance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peaſant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in diſtant ages and remote countries; whilſt the latter, rooted to a ſingle ſpot, and confined to a few years of exiſtence, ſurpaſſes, but very little, his fellow-labourer the ox in the exerciſe of his mental faculties. The ſame, and even a greater, difference will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may ſafely pronounce, that without ſome ſpecies of writing, no people has ever preſerved the faithful annals of their hiſtory, ever made any conſiderable pro-

[16] Tacit. Germ. ii. 19. Literarum ſecreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant. We may reſt contented with this deciſive authority, without entering into the obſcure diſputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celſius, a Swede, a ſcholar, and a philoſopher, was of opinion, that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into ſtraight lines for the eaſe of engraving. See Pelloutier, Hiſtoire des Celtes, l. ii. c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldeſt Runic inſcriptions are ſuppoſed to be of the third century, and the moſt ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters, is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. vii. 18.), who lived towards the end of the ſixth century.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis.

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greſs in the abſtract ſciences, or ever poſſeſſed, in any tolerable degree of perfection, the uſeful and agreeable arts of life.

of arts and agriculture;

Of theſe arts, the ancient Germans were wretchedly deſtitute. They paſſed their lives in a ſtate of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleaſed ſome declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous ſimplicity. Modern Germany is ſaid to contain about two thouſand three hundred walled towns[17]. In a much wider extent of country, the geographer Ptolemy could diſcover no more than ninety places, which he decorates with the name of cities[18]; though, according to our ideas, they would but ill deſerve that ſplendid title. We can only ſuppoſe them to have been rude fortifications, conſtructed in the centre of the woods, and deſigned to ſecure the women, children, and cattle, whilſt the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a ſudden invaſion[19]. But Tacitus aſſerts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities[20]; and that they affected to deſpiſe the works of Roman induſtry, as places of confinement rather than of ſecurity[21]. Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas[22]; each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the ſpot to which a plain, a wood, or a ſtream of freſh water, had induced him to give the preference. Neither ſtone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in theſe ſlight habitations[23]. They were indeed no more than low huts of

[17] Recherches Philoſophiques ſur les Americains, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not miſinformed, a German by birth.

[18] The Alexandrian Geographer is often criticiſed by the accurate Cluverius.

[19] See Cæſar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker in his Hiſtory of Mancheſter, vol. i.

[20] Tacit. Germ. 15.

[21] When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to caſt off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to reſume their ancient manners, they inſiſted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Poſtulamus a vobis, muros coloniæ, mu-" nimenta ſervitii detrahatis; etiam fera ani-" malia, ſi clauſa teneas, virtutis obliviſ-" cuntur." Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 64.

[22] The ſtraggling villages of Sileſia are ſeveral miles in length. See Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

[23] One hundred and forty years after Tacitus, a few more regular ſtructures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian, l. vii. p. 234.

a circular

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a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with ſtraw, and pierced at the top to leave a free paſſage for the ſmoke. In the moſt inclement winter, the hardy German was ſatisfied with a ſcanty garment made of the ſkin of ſome animal. The nations who dwelt towards the North, clothed themſelves in furs; and the women manufactured for their own uſe a coarſe kind of linen[24]. The game of various ſorts, with which the foreſts of Germany were plentifully ſtocked, ſupplied its inhabitants with food and exerciſe[25]. Their monſtrous herds of cattle, leſs remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility[26], formed the principal object of their wealth. A ſmall quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth: the uſe of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people, whoſe property every year experienced a general change by a new diviſion of the arable lands, and who, in that ſtrange operation, avoided diſputes, by ſuffering a great part of their territory to lie waſte and without tillage[27].

and of the uſe of metals.

Gold, ſilver, and iron, were extremely ſcarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both ſkill and patience to inveſtigate thoſe rich veins of ſilver, which have ſo liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunſwick and Saxony. Sweden, which now ſupplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furniſhed a ſufficient proof how little iron they were able to beſtow on what they muſt have deemed the nobleſt uſe of that metal. The various tranſactions of peace and war had introduced ſome Roman coins (chiefly ſilver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more diſtant tribes were abſolutely unacquainted with the uſe of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and prized their rude earthen veſſels as of equal value

[24] Tacit. Germ. 17.
[25] Id. 5.
[26] Cæſar de Bell. Gall. vi. 21.
[27] Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæſar, vi. 22.

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with the ſilver vaſes, the preſents of Rome to their princes and ambaſſadors [28]. To a mind capable of reflection, ſuch leading facts convey more inſtruction, than a tedious detail of ſubordinate circumſtances. The value of money has been ſettled by general conſent to expreſs our wants and our property; as letters were invented to expreſs our ideas; and both theſe inſtitutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and paſſions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were deſigned to repreſent. The uſe of gold and ſilver is in a great meaſure factitious; but it would be impoſſible to enumerate the important and various ſervices which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and faſhioned by the operation of fire, and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the moſt univerſal incitement, iron the moſt powerful inſtrument, of human induſtry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one, nor ſeconded by the other, could emerge from the groſſeſt barbariſm [29].

Their indolence.

If we contemplate a ſavage nation in any part of the globe, a ſupine indolence and a careleſſneſs of futurity will be found to conſtitute their general character. In a civilized ſtate, every faculty of man is expanded and exerciſed; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the ſeveral members of ſociety. The moſt numerous portion of it is employed in conſtant and uſeful labour. The ſelect few, placed by fortune above that neceſſity, can, however, fill up their time by the purſuits of intereſt or glory, by the improvement of their eſtate or of their underſtanding, by the duties, the pleaſures, and even the follies of ſocial life. The Germans were not poſſeſſed of theſe varied reſources. The care of

[28] Tacit. Germ. 6.

[29] It is ſaid that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the uſe of either money or iron, had made a very great progreſs in the arts. Thoſe arts, and the monuments they produced, have been ſtrangely magnified. See Recherches ſur les Americains, tom. ii. p. 153, &c.

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the houſe and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and ſlaves. The lazy warrior, deſtitute of every art that might employ his leiſure hours, conſumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of ſleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diverſity of Nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkeſt receſſes), the ſame barbarians are by turns the moſt indolent and the moſt reſtleſs of mankind. They delight in ſloth, they deteſt tranquillity [30]. The languid ſoul, oppreſſed with its own weight, anxiouſly required ſome new and powerful ſenſation; and war and danger were the only amuſements adequate to its fierce temper. The ſound that ſummoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It rouſed him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active purſuit, and, by ſtrong exerciſe of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, reſtored him to a more lively ſenſe of his exiſtence. In the dull intervals of peace, theſe barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and exceſſive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their paſſions, the other by extinguiſhing their reaſon, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in paſſing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often ſtained their numerous and drunken aſſemblies [31]. Their debts of honour (for in that light they have tranſmitted to us thoſe of play) they diſcharged with the moſt romantic fidelity. The deſperate gameſter, who had ſtaked his perſon and liberty on a laſt throw of the dice, patiently ſubmitted to the deciſion of fortune, and ſuffered himſelf to be bound, chaſtiſed, and ſold into remote ſlavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagoniſt [32].

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is ſtrongly expreſſed by Tacitus) into a

Their taſte for ſtrong liquors.

[30] Tacit. Germ. 15.
[31] Id. 22, 23.
[32] Id. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *paſſion* is wonderfully inherent in the human ſpecies.

certain

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certain ſemblance of wine, was ſufficient for the groſs purpoſes of German debauchery. But thoſe who had taſted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, ſighed for that more delicious ſpecies of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has ſince been executed with ſo much ſucceſs), to naturalize the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure by induſtry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To ſolicit by labour what might be raviſhed by arms, was eſteemed unworthy of the German ſpirit [33]. The intemperate thirſt of ſtrong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had beſtowed thoſe much envied preſents. The Tuſcan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations, attracted them into Italy by the proſpect of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate [34]. And in the ſame manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the ſixteenth century, were allured by the promiſe of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champaigne and Burgundy [35]. Drunkenneſs, the moſt illiberal, but not the moſt dangerous of *our* vices, was ſometimes capable in a leſs civilized ſtate of mankind of occaſioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

State of population.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the ſoil fertilized, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The ſame extent of ground which at preſent maintains, in eaſe and plenty, a million of huſbandmen and artificers, was unable to ſupply an hundred thouſand lazy warriors with the ſimple neceſſaries of life [36]. The Germans abandoned their immenſe foreſts to the exerciſe of hunting, employed in paſturage the moſt conſider-

[33] Tacit. Germ. 14.

[34] Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. v. 33.

[35] Dubos. Hiſt. de la Monarchie Françoiſe, tom. i. p. 193.

[36] The Helvetian nation, which iſſued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and ſex, 368,000 perſons (Cæſar de Bell. Gall. i. 29.). At preſent, the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a ſmall diſtrict on the banks of the Leman Lake, much more diſtinguiſhed for politeneſs than for induſtry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent Tract of M. Muret, in the Memoires de la Societé de Bern.

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able part of their lands, beſtowed on the ſmall remainder a rude and careleſs cultivation, and then accuſed the ſcantineſs and ſterility of a country that refuſed to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine feverely admoniſhed them of the importance of the arts, the national diſtreſs was ſometimes alleviated by the emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth [37]. The poſſeſſion and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they moſt valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vaſt ſilence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conqueſt. The innumerable ſwarms that iſſued, or ſeemed to iſſue, from the great ſtorehouſe of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquiſhed, and by the credulity of ſucceeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually eſtabliſhed, and has been ſupported by writers of diſtinguiſhed reputation, that, in the age of Cæſar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the North were far more numerous than they are in our days [38]. A more ſerious inquiry into the cauſes of population, ſeems to have convinced modern philoſophers of the falſehood, and indeed the impoſſibility, of the ſuppoſition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel [39], we can oppoſe the equal names of Robertſon and Hume [40].

German freedom.

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found ſome compenſation for this ſavage ſtate in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty ſecured their freedom, ſince our deſires and our poſſeſſions are the ſtrongeſt fetters of deſpotiſm. "Among the Suiones (ſays Tacitus), riches are held in ho-

[37] Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the reſt of Paul's followers, repreſent theſe emigrations too much as regular and concerted meaſures.

[38] Sir William Temple and Monteſquieu have indulged, on this ſubject, the uſual livelineſs of their fancy.

[39] Machiavel Hiſt. di Firenze, l. i. Mariana Hiſt. Hiſpan. l. v. c. 1.

[40] Robertſon's Cha. V. Hume's Politic. Eſſ.

"nour-

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"nour. They are *therefore* ſubject to an abſolute monarch, who, "inſtead of intruſting his people with the free uſe of arms, as is "practiſed in the reſt of Germany, commits them to the ſafe cuſ- "tody not of a citizen, or even of a freedman, but of a ſlave. "The neighbours of the Sitones, the Sitones, are ſunk even below "ſervitude; they obey a woman[41]." In the mention of theſe exceptions, the great hiſtorian ſufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loſs to conceive by what means riches and deſpotiſm could penetrate into a remote corner of the North, and extinguiſh the generous flame that blazed with ſuch fierceneſs on the frontier of the Roman provinces: or how the anceſtors of thoſe Danes and Norwegians, ſo diſtinguiſhed in latter ages by their unconquered ſpirit, could thus tamely reſign the great character of German liberty[42]. Some tribes, however, on the coaſt of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquiſhing the rights of men[43]; but in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy, tempered, indeed and controlled, not ſo much by general and poſitive laws, as by the occaſional aſcendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or ſuperſtition[44].

Aſſemblies of the people.

Civil governments, in their firſt inſtitutions, are voluntary aſſociations for mutual defence. To obtain the deſired end, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that each individual ſhould conceive himſelf obliged to ſubmit his private opinion and actions, to the judgment of the

[41] Tacit. Germ. 44, 45. Frenſhemius (who dedicated his ſupplement to Livy, to Chriſtina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expreſſed ſo very little reverence for Northern queens.

[42] May we not ſuſpect that ſuperſtition was the parent of deſpotiſm? The deſcendants of Odin (whoſe race was not extinct till the year 1060) are ſaid to have reigned in Sweden above a thouſand years. The temple of Upſal was the ancient ſeat of religion and empire. In the year 1153 I find a ſingular law, prohibiting the uſe and profeſſion of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old inſtitution? See Dalin's Hiſtory of Sweden in the Bibliothéque Raiſonnée, tom. xl. and xlv.

[43] Tacit. Germ. c. 43.

[44] Id. c. 11, 12, 13, &c.

greater

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greater number of his aſſociates. The German tribes were contented with this rude but liberal outline of political ſociety. As ſoon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was introduced into the general council of his countrymen, ſolemnly inveſted with a ſhield and ſpear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The aſſembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at ſtated ſeaſons, or on ſudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magiſtrates, and the great buſineſs of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, theſe important queſtions were previouſly conſidered, and prepared in a more ſelect council of the principal chieftains[45]. The magiſtrates might deliberate and perſuade, the people only could reſolve and execute; and the reſolutions of the Germans were for the moſt part haſty and violent. Barbarians accuſtomed to place their freedom in gratifying the preſent paſſion, and their courage in overlooking all future conſequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonſtrances of juſtice and policy, and it was the practice to ſignify by a hollow murmur, their diſlike of ſuch timid councils. But whenever a more popular orator propoſed to vindicate the meaneſt citizen from either foreign or domeſtic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to aſſert the national honour, or to purſue ſome enterpriſe full of danger and glory, a loud claſhing of ſhields and ſpears expreſſed the eager applauſe of the aſſembly. For the Germans always met in arms, and it was conſtantly to be dreaded, leſt an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and ſtrong liquors, ſhould uſe thoſe arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious reſolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more nume-

[45] Grotius changes an expreſſion of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *prætractantur*. The correction is equally juſt and ingenious.

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rous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and ſeditious [46].

Authority of the princes and magiſtrates

A general of the tribe was elected on occaſions of danger; and, if the danger was preſſing and extenſive, ſeveral tribes concurred in the choice of the ſame general. The braveſt warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was ſtill invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any ſupreme chief [47]. *Princes* were, however, appointed, in the general aſſembly, to adminiſter juſtice, or rather to compoſe differences [48], in their reſpective diſtricts. In the choice of theſe magiſtrates, as much regard was ſhewn to birth as to merit [49]. To each was aſſigned, by the public, a guard, and a council of an hundred perſons; and the firſt of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour which ſometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title [50].

more abſolute over the property than over the perſons of the Germans.

The comparative view of the powers of the magiſtrates, in two remarkable inſtances, is alone ſufficient to repreſent the whole ſyſtem of German manners. The diſpoſal of the landed property within their diſtrict, was abſolutely veſted in their hands, and they diſtributed it every year according to a new diviſion [51]. At the ſame time they were not authorized to puniſh with death, to impriſon, or even to ſtrike, a private citizen [52]. A people thus jealous of their perſons, and careleſs of their poſſeſſions, muſt have been totally deſtitute of induſtry and the arts, but animated with a high ſenſe of honour and independence.

[46] Even in *our* ancient parliament, the barons often carried a queſtion, not ſo much by the number of votes, as by that of their armed followers.

[47] Cæſar de Bell. Gall. vi. 23.

[48] Minuunt controverſias, is a very happy expreſſion of Cæſar's.

[49] Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute ſumunt. Tacit. Germ. 7.

[50] Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. i. c. 38.

[51] Cæſar, vi. 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.

[52] Tacit. Germ. 7.

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Voluntary engagements.

The Germans reſpected only thoſe duties which they impoſed on themſelves. The moſt obſcure ſoldier reſiſted with diſdain the authority of the magiſtrates. "The nobleſt youths bluſhed not "to be numbered among the faithful companions of ſome renowned "chief, to whom they devoted their arms and ſervice. A noble "emulation prevailed among the companions to obtain the firſt "place in the eſteem of their chief; amongſt the chiefs to acquire "the greateſt number of valiant companions. To be ever ſur-"rounded by a band of ſelect youths, was the pride and ſtrength "of the chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence in war. "The glory of ſuch diſtinguiſhed heroes diffuſed itſelf beyond the "narrow limits of their own tribe. Preſents and embaſſies ſolicited "their friendſhip, and the fame of their arms often enſured "victory to the party which they eſpouſed. In the hour of danger "it was ſhameful for the chief to be ſurpaſſed in valour by his "companions; ſhameful for the companions not to equal the "valour of their chief. To ſurvive his fall in battle, was indelible "infamy. To protect his perſon, and to adorn his glory with the "trophies of their own exploits, were the moſt ſacred of their "duties. The chiefs combated for victory, the companions for the "chief. The nobleſt warriors, whenever their native country was "ſunk in the lazineſs of peace, maintained their numerous bands "in ſome diſtant ſcene of action, to exerciſe their reſtleſs ſpirit, and "to acquire renown by voluntary dangers. Gifts worthy of "ſoldiers, the warlike ſteed, the bloody and ever victorious lance, "were the rewards which the companions claimed from the "liberality of their chief. The rude plenty of his hoſpitable board "was the only pay that *he* could beſtow, or *they* would accept. "War, rapine, and the free-will offerings of his friends, ſupplied "the materials of this munificence [53]." This inſtitution, however

[53] Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

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it might accidentally weaken the ſeveral republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongſt them all the virtues of which barbarians are ſuſceptible; the faith and valour, the hoſpitality and the courteſy, ſo conſpicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry. The honourable gifts, beſtowed by the chief on his brave companions, have been ſuppoſed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the firſt rudiments of the fiefs, diſtributed, after the conqueſt of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vaſſals, with a ſimilar duty of homage and military ſervice [54]. Theſe conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual preſents; but without either impoſing, or accepting, the weight of obligations [55].

German chaſtity.

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly of romance, all the "men were brave, and all the women were chaſte;" and notwithſtanding the latter of theſe virtues is acquired and preſerved with much more difficulty than the former, it is aſcribed, almoſt without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in uſe, except among the princes, and among them only for the ſake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were puniſhed as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was ſeduction juſtified by example and faſhion [56]. We may eaſily diſcover, that Tacitus indulges an honeſt pleaſure in the contraſt of barbarian virtue, with the diſſolute conduct of the Roman ladies: yet there are ſome ſtriking circumſtances that give an air of truth, or at leaſt of probability, to the conjugal faith and chaſtity of the Germans.

[54] Eſprit des Loix, l. xxx. c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Monteſquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reaſon of the Abbé de Mably. Obſervations ſur l'Hiſtoire de France, tom. i. p. 356.

[55] Gaudent muneribus, ſed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur. Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

[56] The adultereſs was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inſpire compaſſion, or procure her a ſecond huſband, 18, 19.

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Its probable cauſes.

Although the progreſs of civilization has undoubtedly contributed to aſſuage the fiercer paſſions of human nature, it ſeems to have been leſs favourable to the virtue of chaſtity, whoſe moſt dangerous enemy is the ſoftneſs of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they poliſh the intercourſe of the ſexes. The groſs appetite of love becomes moſt dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, diſguiſed by ſentimental paſſion. The elegance of dreſs, of motion, and of manners, gives a luſtre to beauty, and inflames the ſenſes through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious ſpectacles, preſent at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty [57]. From ſuch dangers the unpoliſhed wives of the barbarians were ſecured, by poverty, ſolitude, and the painful cares of a domeſtic life. The German huts, open, on every ſide, to the eye of indiſcretion or jealouſy, were a better ſafe-guard of conjugal fidelity, than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Perſian haram. To this reaſon, another may be added of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with eſteem and confidence, conſulted them on every occaſion of importance, and fondly believed, that in their breaſts reſided a ſanctity and wiſdom, more than human. Some of theſe interpreters of fate, ſuch as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fierceſt nations of Germany [58]. The reſt of the ſex, without being adored as goddeſſes, were reſpected as the free and equal companions of ſoldiers; aſſociated even by the marriage ceremony to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory [59]. In their great invaſions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidſt

[57] Ovid employs two hundred lines in the reſearch of places the moſt favourable to love. Above all, he conſiders the theatre as the beſt adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderneſs and ſenſuality.

[58] Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 61. 65.

[59] The marriage preſent was a yoke of oxen, horſes, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is ſomewhat too florid on the ſubject.

the

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the ſound of arms, the various forms of deſtruction, and the honourable wounds of their ſons and huſbands [60]. Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy, by the generous deſpair of the women, who dreaded death much leſs than ſervitude. If the day was irrecoverably loſt, they well knew how to deliver themſelves and their children, with their own hands, from an inſulting victor [61]. Heroines of ſuch a caſt may claim our admiration; but they were moſt aſſuredly, neither lovely, nor very ſuſceptible of love. Whilſt they affected to emulate the ſtern virtues of *man*, they muſt have reſigned that attractive ſoftneſs in which principally conſiſt the charm and weakneſs of *woman*. Conſcious pride taught the German females to ſuppreſs every tender emotion that ſtood in competition with honour, and the firſt honour of the ſex has ever been that of chaſtity. The ſentiments and conduct of theſe high-ſpirited matrons may, at once, be conſidered as a cauſe, as an effect, and as a proof of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raiſed by fanaticiſm, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that diſtinguiſhes the age or country in which it may be found.

Religion.

The religious ſyſtem of the Germans (if the wild opinions of ſavages can deſerve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance [62]. They adored the great viſible objects and agents of Nature, the Sun and the Moon, the Fire and the Earth; together with thoſe imaginary deities, who were ſuppoſed to preſide over the moſt important occupations of human life. They were

[60] The change of *exigere* into *exugere* is a moſt excellent correction.

[61] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones deſtroyed themſelves and their children, they had offered to ſurrender, on condition that they ſhould be received as the ſlaves of the veſtal virgins.

[62] Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obſcure ſubject. The former diſcovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is poſitive, that, under the emblems of the ſun, the moon, and the fire, his pious anceſtors worſhipped the Trinity in unity.

perſuaded,

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perſuaded, that, by ſome ridiculous arts of divination, they could diſcover the will of the ſuperior beings, and that human ſacrifices were the moſt precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applauſe has been haſtily beſtowed on the ſublime notion, entertained by that people, of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor repreſented by any human figure; but when we recollect, that the Germans were unſkilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of ſculpture, we ſhall readily aſſign the true reaſon of a ſcruple, which aroſe not ſo much from a ſuperiority of reaſon, as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, conſecrated by the reverence of ſucceeding generations. Their ſecret gloom, the imagined reſidence of an inviſible power, by preſenting no diſtinct object of fear or worſhip, impreſſed the mind with a ſtill deeper ſenſe of religious horror [63]; and the prieſts, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the uſe of every artifice that could preſerve and fortify impreſſions ſo well ſuited to their own intereſt.

Its effects in peace,

The ſame ignorance, which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the uſeful reſtraints of laws, expoſes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of ſuperſtition. The German prieſts, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had aſſumed a juriſdiction, even in temporal concerns, which the magiſtrate could not venture to exerciſe; and the haughty warrior patiently ſubmitted to the laſh of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war [64]. The defects of civil policy were ſometimes ſupplied by the interpoſition of eccleſiaſtical authority. The latter was conſtantly exerted to maintain ſilence and decency in the popular

[63] The ſacred wood, deſcribed with ſuch ſublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marſeilles; but there were many of the ſame kind in Germany.

[64] Tacit. Germania, c. 7.

aſſemblies;

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assemblies; and was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburg and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *Earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress, the sound of war was hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony [65]. The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custon [66].

in war.

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame, than to moderate, the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises, by the approbation of Heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle [67]; and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder [68]. In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch, who had lost his shield, was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration [69], others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness [70]. All

[65] Tacit. Germania, c. 40.

[66] See Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. i. note 10.

[67] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts.

[68] See an instance of this custom, Tacit. Annal. xiii. 57.

[69] Cæsar, Diodorus, and Lucan, seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls, but M. Pelloutier (Histoire des Celtes, l. iii. c. 18.) labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense.

[70] Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see Fable xx. in the curious version of that book, published by M. Mallet, in his Introduction to the History of Denmark.

agreed,

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agreed, that a life ſpent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the beſt preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.

The bards.

The immortality ſo vainly promiſed by the prieſts, was, in ſome degree, conferred by the bards. That ſingular order of men has moſt deſervedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to inveſtigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been ſufficiently illuſtrated. But we cannot ſo eaſily expreſs, or even conceive, the enthuſiaſm of arms and glory, which they kindled in the breaſt of their audience. Among a poliſhed people, a taſte for poetry is rather an amuſement of the fancy, than a paſſion of the ſoul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruſe the combats deſcribed by Homer or Taſſo, we are inſenſibly ſeduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the ſenſation which a peaceful mind can receive from ſolitary ſtudy! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feaſt of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the anceſtors of thoſe warlike chieftains, who liſtened with tranſport to their artleſs but animated ſtrains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military ſong; and the paſſions which it tended to excite, the deſire of fame, and the contempt of death, were the habitual ſentiments of a German mind[71].

Cauſes which checked the progreſs of the Germans.

Such was the ſituation, and ſuch were the manners, of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their

[71] See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. v. Strabo, l. iv. p. 197. The claſſical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phæacian court, and the ardour infuſed by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the ſame people. Much learned trifling might be ſpared, if our antiquarians would condeſcend to reflect, that ſimilar manners will naturally be produced by ſimilar ſituations.

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ſenſe of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirſt of enterpriſe, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find, that, during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapſed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, theſe formidable barbarians made few conſiderable attempts, and not any material impreſſion on the luxurious and enſlaved provinces of the empire. Their progreſs was checked by their want of arms and diſcipline, and their fury was diverted by the inteſtine diviſions of ancient Germany.

Want of arms

I. It has been obſerved, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron ſoon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike deſtitute of both thoſe valuable metals, were reduced ſlowly to acquire, by their unaſſiſted ſtrength, the poſſeſſion of the one as well as the other. The face of a German army diſplayed their poverty of iron. Swords, and the longer kind of lances, they could ſeldom uſe. Their *frameæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long ſpears headed with a ſharp but narrow iron point, and which, as occaſion required, they either darted from a diſtance or puſhed in cloſe onſet. With this ſpear, and with a ſhield, their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, ſcattered[72] with incredible force, were an additional reſource of the infantry. Their military dreſs, when they wore any, was nothing more than a looſe mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or oſier ſhields. Few of the chiefs were diſtinguiſhed by cuiraſſes, ſcarce any by helmets. Though the horſes of Germany were neither beautiful, ſwift, nor practiſed in the ſkilful evolutions of the Roman manage, ſeveral of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal ſtrength of the Germans conſiſted in their in-

[72] Miſſilia ſpargunt, Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that hiſtorian uſed a vague expreſſion, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

fantry,

CHAP. IX. and of discipline.

fantry[73], which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we recollect the complete armour of the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a just matter of surprise how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field, the strength of the legions, and the various troops of the auxiliaries, which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies, was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans, that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient[74]. During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius[75], formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced

[73] It was their principal distinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback.

[74] The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Hen. Saville has observed several inaccuracies.

[75] Tacit. Hist. iv. 13. Like them, he had lost an eye.

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an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cauſe, defeated the legions, deſtroyed their fortified camps, and employed againſt the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their ſervice. When at length, after an obſtinate ſtruggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis ſecured himſelf and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians ſtill continued to occupy the iſlands of the Rhine[76], the allies not the ſervants of the Roman monarchy.

Civil diſſentions of Germany,

II. The ſtrength of ancient Germany appears formidable, when we conſider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might very poſſibly contain a million of warriors, as all who were of age to bear arms were of a temper to uſe them. But this fierce multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatneſs, was agitated by various and often hoſtile intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent ſtates; and even in each ſtate the union of the ſeveral tribes was extremely looſe and precarious. The barbarians were eaſily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much leſs an inſult; their reſentments were bloody and implacable. The caſual diſputes that ſo frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking, were ſufficient to inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any conſiderable chieftains diffuſed itſelf among their followers and allies. To chaſtiſe the inſolent, or to plunder the defenceleſs, were alike cauſes of war. The moſt formidable ſtates of Germany affected to encompaſs their territories with a wide frontier of ſolitude and deſtation. The awful diſtance preſerved by their neighbours, atteſted the terror of their arms, and in ſome meaſure defended them from the danger of unexpected incurſions[77].

[76] It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they ſubſiſted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. l. iii. c. 30. 37.

[77] Cæſar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. 23.

"The

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fomented by the policy of Rome.

"The Bructeri (it is Tacitus who now ſpeaks) were totally ex-
"terminated by the neighbouring tribes[78], provoked by their inſo-
"lence, allured by the hopes of ſpoil, and perhaps inſpired by the
"tutelar deities of the empire. Above ſixty thouſand barbarians
"were deſtroyed; not by the Roman arms, but in our ſight, and
"for our entertainment. May the nations, enemies of Rome, ever
"preſerve this enmity to each other! We have now attained the
"utmoſt verge of proſperity[79], and have nothing left to demand
"of Fortune except the diſcord of the barbarians[80]." Theſe ſentiments, leſs worthy of the humanity than of the patriotiſm of Tacitus, expreſs the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it a much ſafer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whoſe defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negociations of Rome inſinuated themſelves into the heart of Germany; and every art of ſeduction was uſed with dignity, to conciliate thoſe nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the moſt uſeful friends, as well as the moſt troubleſome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the moſt trifling preſents, which they received either as marks of diſtinction, or as the inſtruments of luxury. In civil diſſenſions, the weaker faction endeavoured to ſtrengthen its intereſt by entering into ſecret connexions with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome; and every plan of union and public good was defeated by the ſtronger bias of private jealouſy and intereſt[81].

[78] They are mentioned however in the ivth and vth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, &c. as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. xiii.

[79] *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good ſenſe, Lipſius, and ſome MSS. declare for *Vergentibus*.

[80] Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, &c. &c.

[81] Many traces of this policy may be diſcovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

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Tranſient union againſt Marcus Antoninus.

The general conſpiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus, comprehended almoſt all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube[82]. It is impoſſible for us to determine whether this haſty confederation was formed by neceſſity, by reaſon, or by paſſion; but we may reſt aſſured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, or provoked by the ambition, of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invaſion required all the firmneſs and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the ſeveral ſtations of attack, and aſſumed in perſon the conduct of the moſt important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the ſpirit of the barbarians was ſubdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni[83], who had taken the lead in the war, were the moſt ſeverely puniſhed in its cataſtrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles[84] from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately ſent into Britain, a remote iſland, where they might be ſecure as hoſtages, and uſeful as ſoldiers[85]. On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor reſolved to reduce their country into the form of a province. His deſigns were diſappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the two firſt centuries of the Imperial hiſtory, was entirely diſſipated, without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

Diſtinction of the German tribes.

In the courſe of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourſelves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without

[82] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 31. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi. c. 5. Aurel. Victor. The emperor Marcus was reduced to ſell the rich furniture of the palace, and to inliſt ſlaves and robbers.

[83] The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Maroboduus. See Strabo, l. vii. Vell. Pat. ii. 105. Tacit. Annal. ii. 63.

[84] Mr. Wotton (Hiſtory of Rome, p. 166.) increaſes the prohibition to ten times the diſtance. His reaſoning is ſpecious, but not concluſive. Five miles were ſufficient for a fortified barrier.

[85] Dion, l. lxxi. and lxxii.

attempting

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attempting to deſcribe or to diſtinguiſh the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæſar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient, or as new tribes ſucceſſively preſent themſelves in the ſeries of this hiſtory, we ſhall conciſely mention their origin, their ſituation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent ſocieties, connected among themſelves by laws and government, bound to their native ſoil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating aſſociations of ſoldiers, almoſt of ſavages. The ſame territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conqueſt and emigration. The ſame communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invaſion, beſtowed a new title on their new confederacy. The diſſolution of an ancient confederacy reſtored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long forgotten appellation. A victorious ſtate often communicated its own name to a vanquiſhed people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the ſtandard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and ſome circumſtance of the enterpriſe ſoon gave a common denomination to the mixed multitude. The diſtinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themſelves, and confounded by the aſtoniſhed ſubjects of the Roman empire[26].

Numbers.

Wars, and the adminiſtration of public affairs, are the principal ſubjects of hiſtory; but the number of perſons intereſted in theſe buſy ſcenes, is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies, millions of obedient ſubjects purſue their uſeful occupations in peace and obſcurity. The attention of the Writer, as well as of the Reader, is ſolely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the diſtricts which happen to be the occaſional ſcene of military operations. But a ſtate of freedom and

[26] See an excellent diſſertation on the origin and migrations of nations, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xviii. p. 48—71. It is ſeldom that the antiquarian and the philoſopher are ſo happily blended.

barbariſm,

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barbariſm, the ſeaſon of civil commotions, or the ſituation of petty republics[87], raiſes almoſt every member of the community into action, and conſequently into notice. The irregular diviſions, and the reſtleſs motions, of the people of Germany, dazzle our imagination, and ſeem to multiply their numbers. The profuſe enumeration of kings and warriors, of armies and nations, inclines us to forget that the ſame objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the moſt ſplendid appellations have been frequently laviſhed on the moſt inconſiderable objects.

[87] Should we ſuſpect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 39,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.

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The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus.—The general Irruption of the Barbarians.—The thirty Tyrants.

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The nature of the ſubject.

A. D. 248—268.

FROM the great ſecular games celebrated by Philip, to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapſed twenty years of ſhame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every inſtant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire ſeemed to approach the laſt and fatal moment of its diſſolution. The confuſion of the times, and the ſcarcity of authentic memorials, oppoſe equal difficulties to the hiſtorian, who attempts to preſerve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always conciſe, often obſcure, and ſometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the ſure operation of its fierce and unreſtrained paſſions, might, on ſome occaſions, ſupply the want of hiſtorical materials.

The emperor Philip.

There is not, for inſtance, any difficulty in conceiving, that the ſucceſſive murders of ſo many emperors had looſened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were diſpoſed to imitate the example of their maſter; and that the caprice of armies, long ſince habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raiſe to the throne the moſt obſcure of their fellow-ſoldiers. Hiſtory can only add, that the rebellion againſt the emperor Philip broke out in the ſummer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæſia; and that

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a ſubaltern officer[1], named Marinus, was the object of their ſeditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded leſt the treaſon of the Mæſian army ſhould prove the firſt ſpark of a general conflagration. Diſtracted with the conſciouſneſs of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the ſenate. A gloomy ſilence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of diſaffection: till at length Decius, one of the aſſembly, aſſuming a ſpirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to diſcover more intrepidity than the emperor ſeemed to poſſeſs. He treated the whole buſineſs with contempt, as a haſty and inconſiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be deſtroyed by the ſame inconſtancy that had created him. The ſpeedy completion of the prophecy inſpired Philip with a juſt eſteem for ſo able a counſellor; and Decius appeared to him the only perſon capable of reſtoring peace and diſcipline to an army, whoſe tumultuous ſpirit did not immediately ſubſide after the murder of Marinus. Decius, who long reſiſted his own nomination, ſeems to have inſinuated the danger of preſenting a leader of merit, to the angry and apprehenſive minds of the ſoldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mæſia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His ſubſequent conduct, after that deciſive meaſure, was unavoidable. He conducted, or followed, his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raiſed up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were ſuperior in number[2]; but the rebels

Services, revolt, victory, and reign of the emperor Decius. A. D. 249.

[1] The expreſſion uſed by Zoſimus and Zonaras may ſignify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

[2] His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. ix. Victor. in Cæſarib. et Epitom.), ſeems to contradict, unleſs it was merely accidental, his ſuppoſed deſcent from the Decii. Six hundred years had beſtowed nobility on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only Plebeians of merit, and among the firſt who ſhared the conſulſhip with the haughty Patricians. Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ, &c. Juvenal, Sat. viii. 254. See the ſpirited ſpeech of Decius, in Livy, x. 9, 10.

formed

formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle, or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His ſon and aſſociate in the empire was maſſacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumſtances than the ambition of that age can uſually plead, was univerſally acknowledged by the ſenate and provinces. It is reported, that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Auguſtus, he had aſſured Philip by a private meſſage, of his innocence and loyalty, ſolemnly proteſting, that, on his arrival in Italy, he would reſign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient ſubject. His profeſſions might be ſincere. But in the ſituation where fortune had placed him, it was ſcarcely poſſible that he could either forgive or be forgiven [3].

He marches againſt the Goths. A. D. 250.

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the adminiſtration of juſtice, when he was ſummoned to the banks of the Danube by the invaſion of the GOTHS. This is the firſt conſiderable occaſion in which hiſtory mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, ſacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the ſubverſion of the Weſtern empire, that the name of GOTHS is frequently but improperly uſed as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbariſm.

Origin of the Goths from Scandinavia.

In the beginning of the ſixth century, and after the conqueſt of Italy, the Goths, in poſſeſſion of preſent greatneſs, very naturally indulged themſelves in the proſpect of paſt and of future glory. They wiſhed to preſerve the memory of their anceſtors, and to tranſmit to poſterity their own atchievements. The principal miniſter of the court of Ravenna, the learned Caſſiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic hiſtory, which conſiſted of twelve

[3] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 20. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 624. Edit. Louvre.

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books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes [4]. These writers paſſed with the moſt artful conciſeneſs over the miſfortunes of the nation, celebrated its ſucceſsful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Aſiatic trophies, that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient ſongs, the uncertain, but the only, memorials of barbarians, they deduced the firſt origin of the Goths, from the vaſt iſland, or peninſula, of Scandinavia [5]. That extreme country of the North was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy; the ties of ancient conſanguinity had been ſtrengthened by recent offices of friendſhip; and a Scandanavian king had cheerfully abdicated his ſavage greatneſs, that he might paſs the remainder of his days in the peaceful and poliſhed court of Ravenna [6]. Many veſtiges, which cannot be aſcribed to the arts of popular vanity, atteſt the ancient reſidence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the ſouthern part of Sweden ſeems to have continued in the poſſeſſion of the leſs enterpriſing remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at preſent divided into eaſt and weſt Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century) whilſt Chriſtianity was advancing with a ſlow progreſs into the north, the Goths and the Swedes compoſed two diſtinct and ſometimes hoſtile members of the ſame monarchy [7]. The latter of theſe two names has prevailed without extinguiſhing the former. The Swedes, who might well be ſatisfied with their own fame in arms, have, in every age, claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of diſcontent againſt the court of Rome, Charles the

[4] See the prefaces of Caſſiodorus and Jornandes: it is ſurpriſing that the latter ſhould be omitted in the excellent edition publiſhed by Grotius, of the Gothic writers.

[5] On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes ſome old Gothic chronicles in verſe. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4.

[6] Jornandes, c. 3.

[7] See in the Prolegomena of Grotius ſome large extracts from Adam of Bremen, and Saxo-Grammaticus. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flouriſhed about the year 1200.

Twelfth

Twelfth inſinuated, that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave anceſtors, who had already ſubdued the miſtreſs of the world [8].

Religion of the Goths.

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple ſubſiſted at Upſal, the moſt conſiderable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and ſanctified by the uncouth repreſentations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddeſs of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general feſtival, that was ſolemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every ſpecies (without excepting the human) were ſacrificed, and their bleeding bodies ſuſpended in the ſacred grove adjacent to the temple [9]. The only traces that now ſubſiſt of this barbaric ſuperſtition are contained in the Edda, a ſyſtem of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and ſtudied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the moſt valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Inſtitutions and death of Odin.

Notwithſtanding the myſterious obſcurity of the Edda, we can eaſily diſtinguiſh two perſons confounded under the name of Odin; the god of war, and the great legiſlator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the north, inſtituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either ſide of the Baltic were ſubdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his perſuaſive eloquence, and by the fame, which he acquired, of a moſt ſkilful magician. The faith that he had propagated, during a long and proſperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehenſive of the ignominious approach of diſeaſe and infirmity, he reſolved to

[8] Voltaire, Hiſtoire de Charles XII. l. iii. When the Auſtrians deſired the aid of the court of Rome againſt Guſtavus Adolphus, they always repreſented that conqueror as the lineal ſucceſſor of Alaric. Harte's Hiſtory of Guſtavus, vol. ii. p. 123.

[9] See Adam of Bremen iu Grotii Prolegomenis, p. 104. The temple of Upſal was deſtroyed by Ingo king of Sweden, who began his reign in the year 1075, and about fourſcore years afterwards a Chriſtian cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's Hiſtory of Sweden, in the Bibliotheque Raiſonnèe.

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expire as became a warrior. In a ſolemn aſſembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himſelf in nine mortal places, haſtening away (as he aſſerted with his dying voice) to prepare the feaſt of heroes in the palace of the god of war [10].

Agreeable but uncertain hypotheſis concerning Odin.

The native and proper habitation of Odin is diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of As-gard. The happy reſemblance of that name with As-burg, or As-of [11], words of a ſimilar ſignification, has given riſe to an hiſtorical ſyſtem of ſo pleaſing a contexture, that we could almoſt wiſh to perſuade ourſelves of its truth. It is ſuppoſed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the north with ſervitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to reſiſt, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Aſiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great deſign of forming, in that inacceſſible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people, which, in ſome remote age, might be ſubſervient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticiſm, ſhould iſſue in numerous ſwarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chaſtiſe the oppreſſors of mankind [12].

Emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia into Pruſſia.

If ſo many ſucceſſive generations of Goths were capable of preſerving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we muſt not expect, from ſuch unlettered barbarians, any diſtinct account of the time and circumſtances of their emigration. To croſs the Baltic

[10] Mallet, Introduction à l'Hiſtoire du Dannemarc.

[11] Mallet, c. iv. p. 55. has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the veſtiges of ſuch a city and people.

[12] This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from ſo memorable a cauſe, might ſupply the noble ground-work of an Epic Poem, cannot ſafely be received as authentic hiſtory. According to the obvious ſenſe of the Edda, and the interpretation of the moſt ſkilful critics, As-gard, inſtead of denoting a real city of the Aſiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the myſtic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia; from whence the prophet was ſuppoſed to deſcend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already ſeated in the ſouthern parts of Sweden.

was an eaſy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were maſters of a ſufficient number of large veſſels, with oars [13], and the diſtance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlſcroon to the neareſt ports of Pomerania and Pruſſia. Here, at length, we land on firm and hiſtoric ground. At leaſt as early as the Chriſtian æra [14], and as late as the age of the Antonines [15], the Goths were eſtabliſhed towards the mouth of the Viſtula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Koningſberg, and Dantzick, were long afterwards founded [16]. Weſtward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were ſpread along the banks of the Oder, and the ſea-coaſt of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh. A ſtriking reſemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, ſeemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people [17]. The latter appear to have been ſubdivided into Oſtrogoths, Viſigoths, and Gepidæ [18]. The diſtinction among the Vandals was more ſtrongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty ſtates, many of which, in a future age, expanded themſelves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines, the Goths were ſtill ſeated in Pruſſia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman pro- From Pruſſia to the Ukraine.

[13] Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

[14] Tacit. Annal. ii. 62. If we could yield a firm aſſent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marſeilles, we muſt allow that the Goths had paſſed the Baltic at leaſt three hundred years before Chriſt.

[15] Ptolemy, l. ii.

[16] By the German colonies who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The conqueſt and converſion of Pruſſia were completed by thoſe adventurers in the xiiith century.

[17] Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. iv. 14.), and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 1.) agree in this opinion. They lived in diſtant ages, and poſſeſſed different means of inveſtigating the truth.

[18] The *Oſtro* and *Viſi*, the eaſtern and weſtern Goths obtained thoſe denominations from their original ſeats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and ſettlements they preſerved, with their names, the ſame relative ſituation. When they firſt departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three veſſels. The third being a heavy ſailer lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards ſwelled into a nation, received from that circumſtance the appellation of Gepidæ or Loiterers. Jornandes, c. 17.

vince-

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vince of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and deſtructive inroads [19]. In this interval, therefore, of about ſeventy years, we muſt place the ſecond migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cauſe that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unſettled barbarians. Either a peſtilence, or a famine, a victory, or a defeat, an oracle of the Gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were ſufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the ſouth. Beſides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and ſpirit of the Goths were equal to the moſt dangerous adventures. The uſe of round bucklers and ſhort ſwords rendered them formidable in a cloſe engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, gave uncommon union and ſtability to their councils [20]; and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth anceſtor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the aſcendant of perſonal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anſes*, or demigods of the Gothic nation [21].

The Gothic nation increaſes in its march.

The fame of a great enterpriſe excited the braveſt warriors from all the Vandalic ſtates of Germany, many of whom are ſeen a few years afterwards combating under the common ſtandard of the Goths [22]. The firſt motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river univerſally conceived by the ancients to be the ſouthern branch of the Boryſthenes [23]. The windings of that

[19] See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, ſee Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 346.

[20] Omnium harum gentium inſigne, rotunda ſcuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obſequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

[21] Jornandes, c. 13, 14.

[22] The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Maſcou's Hiſtory of the Germans, l. v. A paſſage in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 28, ſeems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occaſioned by the preſſure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

[23] D'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe.

great ſtream, through the plains of Poland and Ruſſia gave a direction to their line of march, and a conſtant ſupply of freſh water and paſturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown courſe of the river, confident in their valour, and careleſs of whatever power might oppoſe their progreſs. The Baſtarnæ and the Venedi were the firſt who preſented themſelves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulſion, increaſed the Gothic army. The Baſtarnæ dwelt on the northern ſide of the Carpathian mountains; the immenſe tract of land that ſeparated the Baſtarnæ from the ſavages of Finland, was poſſeſſed, or rather waſted, by the Venedi[24]: we have ſome reaſon to believe that the firſt of theſe nations, which diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the Macedonian war[25], and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c. derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority, a Sarmatian extraction may be aſſigned to the Venedi, who rendered themſelves ſo famous in the middle ages[26]. But the confuſion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the moſt accurate obſervers[27]. As the Goths advanced near the Euxine ſea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the firſt Germans who ſaw the mouths of the Boryſthenes, and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteriſtic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we ſhall diſcover that thoſe two great portions of human kind were principally diſtinguiſhed by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a cloſe dreſs, or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of ſeveral wives, by a military force, conſiſting, for the moſt part, either of infantry or cavalry; and above all by the uſe of

Diſtinction of Germans and Sarmatians.

[24] Tacit. Germania, c. 46.

[25] Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii. c. 43.

[26] The Venedi, the *Slavi*, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the ſame people. Jornandes, c. 24.

[27] Tacitus moſt aſſuredly deſerves that title, and even his cautious ſuſpenſe is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

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the Teutonic, or of the Sclavonian language; the laſt of which has been diffuſed by conqueſt, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

Deſcription of the Ukraine.

The Goths were now in poſſeſſion of the Ukraine, a country of conſiderable extent and uncommon fertility, interſected with navigable rivers, which, from either ſide, diſcharge themſelves into the Boryſthenes; and interſperſed with large and lofty foreſts of oaks. The plenty of game and fiſh, the innumerable bee-hives, depoſited in the hollow of old trees, and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the ſize of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptneſs of the ſoil for every ſpecies of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all diſplayed the liberality of Nature, and tempted the induſtry of man[28]. But the Goths withſtood all theſe temptations, and ſtill adhered to a life of idleneſs, of poverty, and of rapine.

The Goths invade the Roman provinces.

The Scythian hords, which, towards the eaſt, bordered on the new ſettlements of the Goths, preſented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the proſpect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harveſts, ſown by the hands of an induſtrious, and expoſed to be gathered by thoſe of a warlike, people. It is probable, that the conqueſts of Trajan, maintained by his ſucceſſors, leſs for any real advantage, than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that ſide. The new and unſettled province of Dacia was neither ſtrong enough to reſiſt, nor rich enough to ſatiate, the rapaciouſneſs of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Nieſter were conſidered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Da-

[28] Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii. p. 379.) traverſed the Ukraine in his journey from Peterſburgh to Conſtantinople. The modern face of the country is a juſt repreſentation of the ancient, ſince, in the hands of the Coſſacks, it ſtill remains in a ſtate of nature.

nube

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nube were more careleſsly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæſia lived in ſupine ſecurity, fondly conceiving themſelves at an inacceſſible diſtance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their miſtake. The king, or leader of that fierce nation, traverſed with contempt the province of Dacia, and paſſed both the Nieſter and the Danube without encountering any oppoſition capable of retarding his progreſs. The relaxed diſcipline of the Roman troops betrayed the moſt important poſts, where they were ſtationed, and the fear of deſerved puniſhment induced great numbers of them to inliſt under the Gothic ſtandard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his ſiſter, and at that time the capital of the ſecond Mæſia[29]. The inhabitants conſented to ranſom their lives and property, by the payment of a large ſum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deſerts, animated, rather than ſatisfied, with the firſt ſucceſs of their arms againſt an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was ſoon tranſmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had paſſed the Danube a ſecond time, with more conſiderable forces; that his numerous detachments ſcattered devaſtation over the province of Mæſia, whilſt the main body of the army, conſiſting of ſeventy thouſand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the moſt daring atchievements, required the preſence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Various events of the Gothic war. A. D. 250.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories[30]. On his

[29] In the ſixteenth chapter of Jornandes, inſtead of *ſecundo* Mæſiam, we may venture to ſubſtitute *ſecundam*, the ſecond Mæſia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (ſee Hierocles de Provinciis, and Weſſeling ad locum, p. 636, Itinerar.). It is ſurpriſing how this palpable error of the ſcribe could eſcape the judicious correction of Grotius.

[30] The place is ſtill called Nicop. The little ſtream, on whoſe banks it ſtood, falls into the Danube. D'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 307.

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approach they raiſed the ſiege, but with a deſign only of marching away to a conqueſt of greater importance, the ſiege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of mount Hæmus[31]. Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himſelf at a conſiderable diſtance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his purſuers. The camp of the Romans was ſurpriſed and pillaged, and, for the firſt time, their emperor fled in diſorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long reſiſtance, Philippopolis, deſtitute of ſuccour, was taken by ſtorm. A hundred thouſand perſons are reported to have been maſſacred in the ſack of that great city[32]. Many priſoners of conſequence became a valuable acceſſion to the ſpoil; and Priſcus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, bluſhed not to aſſume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome[33]. The time, however, conſumed in that tedious ſiege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, reſtore the diſcipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted ſeveral parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were haſtening to ſhare the victory of their countrymen[34], intruſted the paſſes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity[35], repaired and ſtrengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmoſt vigilance to oppoſe either the progreſs or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiouſly waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and deciſive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms[36].

[31] Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Weſſeling Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd miſtake, aſcribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predeceſſor of Decius.

[32] Ammian. xxxi. 5.

[33] Aurel. Victor, c. 29.

[34] *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on ſome medals of Decius, inſinuate theſe advantages.

[35] Claudius (who afterwards reigned with ſo much glory) was poſted in the paſs of Thermopylæ with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and 160 light horſe, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officer, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 200.

[36] Jornandes, c. 16—18. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 22. In the general account of this war, it is eaſy to diſcover the oppoſite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In careleſſneſs alone they are alike.

At

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Decius revives the office of cenſor in the perſon of Valerian.

At the ſame time when Decius was ſtruggling with the violence of the tempeſt, his mind, calm and deliberate amidſt the tumult of war, inveſtigated the more general cauſes, that, ſince the age of the Antonines, had ſo impetuouſly urged the decline of the Roman greatneſs. He ſoon diſcovered that it was impoſſible to replace that greatneſs on a permanent baſis, without reſtoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppreſſed majeſty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous deſign, he firſt reſolved to revive the obſolete office of cenſor; an office, which, as long as it had ſubſiſted in its priſtine integrity, had ſo much contributed to the perpetuity of the ſtate[37], till it was uſurped and gradually neglected by the Cæſars[38]. Conſcious that the favour of the ſovereign may confer power, but that the eſteem of the people can alone beſtow authority, he ſubmitted the choice of the cenſor to the unbiaſſed voice of the ſenate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then ſerved with diſtinction in the army of Decius, was declared the moſt worthy of that exalted honour. As ſoon as the decree of the ſenate was tranſmitted to the emperor, he aſſembled a great council in his camp, and, before the inveſtiture of the cenſor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy "Valerian," ſaid the prince, to his diſtinguiſhed ſubject, "happy "in the general approbation of the ſenate and of the Roman re- "public! Accept the cenſorſhip of mankind; and judge of our "manners. You will ſelect thoſe who deſerve to continue mem- "bers of the ſenate; you will reſtore the equeſtrian order to its "ancient ſplendour; you will improve the revenue, yet moderate the

A. D. 251. 27th October.

[37] Monteſquieu, Grandeur et Decadence des Romains, c. viii. He illuſtrates the nature and uſe of the cenſorſhip with his uſual ingenuity, and with uncommon preciſion.

[38] Veſpaſian and Titus were the laſt cenſors (Pliny Hiſt. Natur. vii. 49. Cenſorinus de Die Natali). The modeſty of Trajan refuſed an honour which he deſerved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60.

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" public burdens. You will diſtinguiſh into regular claſſes the " various and infinite multitude of citizens, and accurately review " the military ſtrength, the wealth, the virtue, and the reſources " of Rome. Your deciſions ſhall obtain the force of laws. The " army, the palace, the miniſters of juſtice, and the great officers of " the empire, are all ſubject to your tribunal. None are exempted, " excepting only the ordinary conſuls[39], the prefect of the city, the " king of the ſacrifices, and (as long as ſhe preſerves her chaſtity in- " violate) the eldeſt of the veſtal virgins. Even theſe few, who may " not dread the ſeverity, will anxiouſly ſolicit the eſteem, of the Ro- " man cenſor[40]."

The deſign impracticable, and without effect.

A magiſtrate, inveſted with ſuch extenſive powers, would have appeared not ſo much the miniſter as the colleague of his ſovereign[41]. Valerian juſtly dreaded an elevation ſo full of envy and of ſuſpicion. He modeſtly urged the alarming greatneſs of the truſt, his own inſufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully inſinuated, that the office of cenſor was inſeparable from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a ſubject were unequal to the ſupport of ſuch an immenſe weight of cares and of power[42]. The approaching event of war ſoon put an end to the proſecution of a project ſo ſpecious but ſo impracticable; and whilſt it preſerved Valerian from the danger, ſaved the emperor Decius from the diſappointment, which would moſt probably have attended it. A cenſor may maintain, he can never reſtore, the morals of a ſtate. It is impoſſible for ſuch a magiſtrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unleſs he is ſupported by a quick ſenſe of honour and virtue in the minds of the people; by a decent reve-

[39] Yet in ſpite of this exemption Pompey appeared before that tribunal, during his conſulſhip. The occaſion indeed was equally ſingular and honourable. Plutar. in Pomp. p. 630.

[40] See the original ſpeech, in the Auguſtan Hiſt. p. 173, 174.

[41] This tranſaction might deceive Zonaras, who ſuppoſes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii. p. 625.

[42] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 174. The emperor's reply is omitted.

rence for the public opinion, and by a train of uſeful prejudices combating on the ſide of national manners. In a period when theſe principles are annihilated, the cenſorial juriſdiction muſt either ſink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial inſtrument of vexatious oppreſſion[43]. It was eaſier to vanquiſh the Goths, than to eradicate the public vices; yet even in the firſt of theſe enterpriſes, Decius loſt his army and his life.

Defeat and death of Decius and his ſon.

The Goths were now, on every ſide, ſurrounded and purſued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had periſhed in the long ſiege of Philippopolis, and the exhauſted country could no longer afford ſubſiſtence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchaſed, by the ſurrender of all their booty and priſoners, the permiſſion of an undiſturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and reſolving, by the chaſtiſement of theſe invaders, to ſtrike a ſalutary terror into the nations of the North, refuſed to liſten to any terms of accommodation. The high-ſpirited barbarians preferred death to ſlavery. An obſcure town of Mæſia, called Forum Terebronii[44], was the ſcene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a moraſs. In the beginning of the action, the ſon of Decius, a youth of the faireſt hopes, and already aſſociated to the honours of the purple, was ſlain by an arrow, in the ſight of his afflicted father; who ſummoning all his fortitude, admoniſhed the diſmayed troops, that the loſs of a ſingle ſoldier was of little importance to the republic[45]. The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of deſpair againſt grief and rage. The

[43] Such as the attempts of Auguſtus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. iii. 24.

[44] Tillemont, Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 598. As Zoſimus and ſome of his followers miſtake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia.

[45] Aurelius Victor allows two diſtinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jornandes.

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first line of the Goths at length gave way in diſorder; the ſecond, advancing to ſuſtain it, ſhared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to diſpute the paſſage of the moraſs, which was imprudently attempted by the preſumption of the enemy. "Here "the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverſe to the "Romans: the place deep with ooze, ſinking under thoſe who ſtood, "ſlippery to ſuch as advanced; their armour heavy, the waters deep; "nor could they wield, in that uneaſy ſituation, their weighty jave-"lins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were enured to encounters "in the bogs, their perſons tall, their ſpears long, ſuch as could "wound at a diſtance[46]." In this moraſs the Roman army, after an ineffectual ſtruggle, was irrecoverably loſt; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found[47]. Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accompliſhed prince, active in war, and affable in peace[48]; who, together with his ſon, has deſerved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brighteſt examples of ancient virtue[49].

Election of Gallus. A. D. 251. December.

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the inſolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and ſubmiſſively obeyed, the decree of the ſenate, which regulated the ſucceſſion to the throne. From a juſt regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hoſtilianus, his only ſurviving ſon; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whoſe experience and ability ſeemed equal to the great truſt of guardian to the young prince and the diſtreſſed empire[50]. The

[46] I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. i. 64.) the picture of a ſimilar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

[47] Jornandes, c. 18. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 22. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 627. Aurelius Victor.

[48] The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred and fifty-one, ſince the new princes took poſſeſſion of the conſulſhip on the enſuing calends of January.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt p. 223. gives them a very honourable place among the ſmall number of good emperors who reigned between Auguſtus and Diocletian.

[50] Hæc ubi Patres comperere . . . . . decernunt. Victor in Cæſaribus.

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first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and, what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions [51].

Retreat of the Goths.

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin [52]. After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt [53]. But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed

Gallus purchases peace by the payment of an annual tribute.

Popular discontent.

[51] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628.

[52] A *Sella*, a *Toga*, and a golden *Patera* of five pounds weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt (Livy, xxvii. 4.). *Quina Millia Æris*, a weight of copper in value about eighteen pounds sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Livy, xxxi. 9.).

[53] See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 25. Edit. Louvre.

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to accept ſuch unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a neceſſary conceſſion had probably ſaved his country, became the object of the general contempt and averſion. The death of Hoſtilianus, though it happened in the midſt of a raging peſtilence, was interpreted as the perſonal crime of Gallus [54]; and even the defeat of the late emperor was aſcribed by the voice of ſuſpicion to the perfidious counſels of his hated ſucceſſor [55]. The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the firſt year of his adminiſtration [56], ſerved rather to inflame than to appeaſe the public diſcontent; and, as ſoon as the apprehenſions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more ſenſibly felt.

Victory and revolt of Æmilianus. A. D. 253.

But the Romans were irritated to a ſtill higher degree, when they diſcovered that they had not even ſecured their repoſe, though at the expence of their honour. The dangerous ſecret of the wealth and weakneſs of the empire, had been revealed to the world. New ſwarms of barbarians, encouraged by the ſucceſs, and not conceiving themſelves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, ſpread devaſtation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which ſeemed abandoned by the puſillanimous emperor, was aſſumed by Æmilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mæſia; who rallied the ſcattered forces, and revived the fainting ſpirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chaſed, and purſued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader diſtributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the ſoldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle [57]. Gallus, who, careleſs of the general welfare, indulged himſelf in the pleaſures of Italy, was almoſt in the

[54] For the plague, ſee Jornandes, c. 19. and Victor in Cæſaribus.

[55] Theſe improbable accuſations are alleged by Zoſimus, l. i. p. 23, 24.

[56] Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at leaſt obſerved the peace which his victorious countrymen had ſworn to Gallus.

[57] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 25, 26.

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ſame inſtant informed of the ſucceſs, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach, of his aſpiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in ſight of each other, the ſoldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their ſovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a conſiderable increaſe of pay to all deſerters [58]. The murder of Gallus, and of his ſon Voluſianus, put an end to the civil war; and the ſenate gave a legal ſanction to the rights of conqueſt. The letters of Æmilianus to that aſſembly, diſplayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He aſſured them, that he ſhould reſign to their wiſdom the civil adminiſtration; and, contenting himſelf with the quality of their general, would in a ſhort time aſſert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the Eaſt [59]. His pride was flattered by the applauſe of the ſenate; and medals are ſtill extant, repreſenting him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger [60].

Gallus abandoned and ſlain. A. D. 253. May.

If the new monarch poſſeſſed the abilities, he wanted the time, neceſſary to fulfil theſe ſplendid promiſes. Leſs than four months intervened between his victory and his fall [61]. He had vanquiſhed Gallus: he ſunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had ſent Valerian, already diſtinguiſhed by the honourable title of cenſor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany [62] to his aid. Valerian executed that commiſſion with zeal and fidelity; and as he arrived too late to ſave his ſovereign, he reſolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who ſtill lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the ſanctity of his character, but much more by the ſupe-

Valerian revenges the death of Gallus, and is acknowledged emperor.

[58] Victor in Cæſaribus.

[59] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628.

[60] Banduri Numiſmata, p. 94.

[61] Eutropius, l. ix. c. 6. ſays tertio menſe. Euſebius omits this emperor.

[62] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 28. Eutropius and Victor ſtation Valerian's army in Rhætia.

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A. D. 253. Auguſt.

rior ſtrength of his army; and as they were now become as incapable of perſonal attachment as they had always been of conſtitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who ſo lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the poſſeſſion of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence ſingular in that age of revolutions; ſince he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predeceſſor, whom he dethroned.

Character of Valerian.

Valerian was about ſixty years of age[63] when he was inveſted with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace, or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual aſcent through the honours of the ſtate, he had deſerved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himſelf the enemy of tyrants[64]. His noble birth, his mild but unblemiſhed manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the ſenate and people; and if mankind (according to the obſervation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to chuſe a maſter, their choice would moſt aſſuredly have fallen on Valerian[65]. Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at leaſt his ſpirit, were affected by the languor and coldneſs of old age. The conſciouſneſs of his decline engaged him to ſhare the throne with a younger and more active aſſociate[66]: the emergency of the times demanded a general no leſs than a prince; and the experience of the Roman cenſor might have directed him where to beſtow the Imperial purple, as the reward of

General misfortunes of the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus. A. D. 253—268.

[63] He was about ſeventy at the time of his acceſſion, or, as it is more probable, of his death. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 173. Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 893, note 1.

[64] Inimicus Tyrannorum. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 173. In the glorious ſtruggle of the ſenate againſt Maximin, Valerian acted a very ſpirited part. Hiſt. Aug. p. 156.

[65] According to the diſtinction of Victor, he ſeems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Auguſtus from the ſenate.

[66] From Victor and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 710.) very juſtly infers, that Gallienus was aſſociated to the empire about the month of Auguſt of the year 253.

military merit. But inſtead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, conſulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately inveſted with the ſupreme honours his ſon Gallienus, a youth whoſe effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obſcurity of a private ſtation. The joint government of the father and the ſon ſubſiſted about ſeven, and the ſole adminiſtration of Gallienus continued about eight, years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted ſeries of confuſion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the ſame time, and on every ſide, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domeſtic uſurpers, we ſhall conſult order and perſpicuity, by purſuing, not ſo much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural diſtribution of ſubjects. The moſt dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were, 1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Perſians. Under theſe general appellations, we may comprehend the adventures of leſs conſiderable tribes, whoſe obſcure and uncouth names would only ſerve to oppreſs the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

Inroads of the barbarians.

I. As the poſterity of the Franks compoſe one of the greateſt and moſt enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhauſted in the diſcovery of their unlettered anceſtors. To the tales of credulity, have ſucceeded the ſyſtems of fancy. Every paſſage has been ſifted, every ſpot has been ſurveyed, that might poſſibly reveal ſome faint traces of their origin. It has been ſuppoſed, that Pannonia[67], that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany[68], gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the moſt rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigra-

Origin and confederacy of the Franks.

[67] Various ſyſtems have been formed to explain a difficult paſſage in Gregory of Tours, l. ii. c. 9.

[68] The Geographer of Ravenna, i. 11. by mentioning *Mauringania* on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient ſeat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious ſyſtem of Leibnitz.

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tions of ideal conquerors, have acquieſced in a ſentiment whoſe ſimplicity perſuades us of its truth [69]. They ſuppoſe, that about the year two hundred and forty [70], a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weſer. The preſent circle of Weſtphalia, the Landgraviate of Heſſe, and the duchies of Brunſwick and Luneburg, were the ancient ſeat of the Chauci, who, in their inacceſſible moraſſes, defied the Roman arms [71]; of the Cheruſci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of ſeveral other tribes of inferior power and renown [72]. The love of liberty was the ruling paſſion of theſe Germans; the enjoyment of it their beſt treaſure; the word that expreſſed that enjoyment, the moſt pleaſing to their ear. They deſerved, they aſſumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguiſh, the peculiar names of the ſeveral ſtates of the confederacy [73]. Tacit conſent, and mutual advantage, dictated the firſt laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and exprience. The league of the Franks may admit of ſome compariſon with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent ſovereignty, conſults with its brethren in the common cauſe, without acknowledging the authority of any ſupreme head, or repreſentative aſſembly [74]. But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wiſe and honeſt policy of the Swiſs. An inconſtant ſpirit, the thirſt of rapine,

[69] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 20. M. Freret, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xviii.

[70] Moſt probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumſtance fully canvaſſed by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 710. 1181.

[71] Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xvi. 1. The panegyriſts frequently allude to the moraſſes of the Franks.

[72] Tacit. Germania, c. 30. 37.

[73] In a ſubſequent period, moſt of thoſe old names are occaſionally mentioned. See ſome veſtiges of them in Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii.

[74] Simler de Republica Helvet. cum notis Fuſelin.

and a diſregard to the moſt ſolemn treaties, diſgraced the character of the Franks.

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They invade Gaul,

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their ſtrength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invaſion, and required the preſence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power [75]. Whilſt that prince, and his infant ſon Salonius, diſplayed, in the court of Treves, the majeſty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Poſthumus, who, though he afterwards betrayed the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great intereſt of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long ſeries of victories. Trophies and titles atteſt (if ſuch evidence can atteſt) the fame of Poſthumus, who is repeatedly ſtyled The conqueror of the Germans, and the ſaviour of Gaul [76].

ravage Spain,

But a ſingle fact, the only one indeed of which we have any diſtinct knowledge, eraſes, in a great meaſure, theſe monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier againſt the daring ſpirit of enterpriſe with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devaſtations ſtretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees: nor were they ſtopped by thoſe mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to reſiſt, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greateſt part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and deſtructive hoſtilities. Tarragona, the flouriſhing capital of a peaceful province, was ſacked and almoſt deſtroyed [77]; and ſo late as

[75] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 27.

[76] M. de Brequigny (in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxx.) has given us a very curious life of Poſthumus. A ſeries of the Auguſtan Hiſtory from Medals and Inſcriptions has been more than once planned, and is ſtill much wanted.

[77] Aurel. Victor, c. 33. Inſtead of *Pæne direpto*, both the ſenſe and the expreſſion require *deleto*; though indeed, for different reaſons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the beſt, and of the worſt, writers.

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the days of Oroſius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, ſcattered amidſt the ruins of magnificent cities, ſtill recorded the rage of the barbarians[78]. When the exhauſted country no longer ſupplied a variety of plunder, the Franks ſeized on ſome veſſels in the ports of Spain[79], and tranſported themſelves into Mauritania. The diſtant province was aſtoniſhed with the fury of theſe barbarians, who ſeemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion, were equally unknown on the coaſt of Africa[80].

and paſs over into Africa.

II. In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at preſent called the Marquiſate of Luſace, there exiſted, in ancient times, a ſacred wood, the awful ſeat of the ſuperſtition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confeſſing, by their ſervile bonds and ſuppliant poſture, the immediate preſence of the ſovereign Deity[81]. Patriotiſm contributed as well as devotion to conſecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones[82]. It was univerſally believed, that the nation had received its firſt exiſtence on that ſacred ſpot. At ſtated periods, the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood, reſorted thither by their ambaſſadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human ſacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to thoſe of the Danube. They were diſtinguiſhed from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dreſſing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that ſhewed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the ene-

Origin and renown of the Suevi.

[78] In the time of Auſonius (the end of the fourth century) Herda or Lerida was in a very ruinous ſtate (Auſon. Epiſt. xxv. 58.), which probably was the conſequence of this invaſion.

[79] Valeſius is therefore miſtaken in ſuppoſing that the Franks had invaded Spain by ſea.

[80] Aurel. Victor. Eutrop. ix. 6.

[81] Tacit. Germania, 38.

[82] Cluver. Germ. Antiq. iii. 25.

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my[83]. Jealous, as the Germans were, of military renown, they all confeſſed the ſuperior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Uſipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vaſt army, encountered the dictator Cæſar, declared that they eſteemed it not a diſgrace to have fled before a people, to whoſe arms the immortal gods themſelves were unequal[84].

A mixed body of Suevi aſſume the name of Alemanni,

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an innumerable ſwarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Mein, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in queſt either of food, of plunder, or of glory[85]. The haſty army of volunteers gradually coaleſced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was compoſed from ſo many different tribes, aſſumed the name of Allemanni, or *All-men*; to denote at once their various lineage, and their common bravery[86]. The latter was ſoon felt by the Romans in many a hoſtile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horſeback; but their cavalry was rendered ſtill more formidable by a mixture of light infantry, ſelected from the braveſt and moſt active of the youth, whom frequent exerciſe had enured to accompany the horſeman in the longeſt march, the moſt rapid charge, or the moſt precipitate retreat[87].

invade Gaul and Italy,

This warlike people of Germans had been aſtoniſhed by the immenſe preparations of Alexander Severus, they were diſmayed by the arms of his ſucceſſor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceneſs to themſelves. But ſtill hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increaſed the general diſorder that enſued after the death of Decius. They inflicted ſevere wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul: they

[83] Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, ſic Suevorum ingenui a ſervis ſeparantur. A proud ſeparation!

[84] Cæſar in Bello Gallico, iv. 7.

[85] Victor in Caracal. Dion Caſſius, lxvii. p. 1350.

[86] This etymology (far different from thoſe which amuſe the fancy of the learned) is preſerved by Aſinius Quadratus, an original hiſtorian, quoted by Agathias, i. c. 5.

[87] The Suevi engaged Cæſar in this manner, and the manœuvre deſerved the approbation of the conqueror (in Bello Gallico, i. 48.).

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were the firſt who removed the veil that covered the feeble majeſty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated acroſs the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps, into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and diſplayed the victorious banners of barbarians almoſt in ſight of Rome[88]. The inſult and the danger rekindled in the ſenate ſome ſparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far diſtant wars, Valerian in the eaſt, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and reſources of the Romans were in themſelves. In this emergency, the ſenators reſumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garriſon the capital, and filled up their numbers, by inliſting into the public ſervice the ſtouteſt and moſt willing of the Plebeians. The Alemanni, aſtoniſhed with the ſudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with ſpoil; and their retreat was eſteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans[89].

are repulſed from Rome by the ſenate and people.

The ſenators excluded by Gallienus from the military ſervice.

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much leſs delighted, than alarmed, with the courage of the ſenate, ſince it might one day prompt them to reſcue the public from domeſtic tyranny, as well as from foreign invaſion. His timid ingratitude was publiſhed to his ſubjects, in an edict which prohibited the ſenators from exerciſing any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundleſs. The rich and luxurious nobles, ſinking into their natural character, accepted, as a favour, this diſgraceful exemption from military ſervice; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas; they cheerfully reſigned the more dangerous cares of empire, to the rough hands of peaſants and ſoldiers[90].

[88] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 215, 216. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8. Hieronym. Chron. Oroſius, vii. 22.

[89] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 34.

[90] Aurel. Victor, in Gallieno et Probo. His complaints breathe an uncommon ſpirit of freedom.

Another

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Gallienus contracts an alliance with the Alemanni.

Another invaſion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aſpect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the lower empire. Three hundred thouſand of that warlike people are ſaid to have been vanquiſhed, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in perſon, at the head of only ten thouſand Romans[91]. We may however, with great probability, aſcribe this incredible victory, either to the credulity of the hiſtorian, or to ſome exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature, that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He eſpouſed Pipa the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conqueſts[92]. To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample ſettlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpoliſhed beauty ſeem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconſtant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by thoſe of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome ſtill refuſed the name of marriage, to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has ſtigmatized the German princeſs with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus[93].

Inroads of the Goths.

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at leaſt from Pruſſia, to the mouth of the Boryſthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Boryſthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the laſt mentioned river was perpetually infeſted by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than uſual firmneſs and ſucceſs. The provinces that were the ſeat of war, recruited the armies of Rome with

[91] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 631.

[92] One of the Victors calls him King of the Marcomanni, the other, of the Germans.

[93] See Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c.

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an inexhauſtible ſupply of hardy ſoldiers; and more than one of theſe Illyrian peaſants attained the ſtation, and diſplayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who inceſſantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated ſometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia; their progreſs was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the Imperial lieutenants[94]. But the great ſtream of the Gothic hoſtilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new ſettlement of the Ukraine, ſoon became maſters of the northern coaſt of the Euxine: to the ſouth of that inland ſea, were ſituated the ſoft and wealthy provinces of Aſia Minor, which poſſeſſed all that could attract, and nothing that could reſiſt, a barbarian conqueror.

Conqueſt of the Boſphorus by the Goths,

The banks of the Boryſthenes are only ſixty miles diſtant from the narrow entrance[95] of the peninſula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Cherſoneſus Taurica[96]. On that inhoſpitable ſhore, Euripides, embelliſhing with exquiſite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the ſcene of one of his moſt affecting tragedies[97]. The bloody ſacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Oreſtes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over ſavage fierceneſs, ſerve to repreſent an hiſtorical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninſula, were, in ſome degree, reclaimed from their brutal manners, by a gradual intercourſe with the Grecian colonies, which ſettled along the maritime coaſt. The little kingdom of Boſphorus, whoſe capital was ſituated on the Straits, through which the Mæotis communicates itſelf to the Euxine, was compoſed of degenerate Greeks, and half-civilized barbarians. It

[94] See the lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[95] It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars, p. 598.

[96] M. de Peyſſonel, who had been French conſul at Caffa, in his Obſervations ſur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

[97] Euripides in Iphigenia in Taurid.

ſubſiſted,

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ſubſiſted, as an independent ſtate, from the time of the Peloponneſian war[98], was at laſt ſwallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates[99], and, with the reſt of his dominions, ſunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Auguſtus[100], the kings of Boſphorus were the humble, but not uſeleſs, allies of the empire. By preſents, by arms, and by a ſlight fortification drawn acroſs the Iſthmus, they effectually guarded againſt the roving plunderers of Sarmatia, the acceſs of a country, which, from its peculiar ſituation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine ſea and Aſia Minor[101]. As long as the ſceptre was poſſeſſed by a lineal ſucceſſion of kings, they acquitted themſelves of their important charge with vigilance and ſucceſs. Domeſtic factions, and the fears, or private intereſt, of obſcure uſurpers, who ſeized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Boſphorus. With the acquiſition of a ſuperfluous waſte of fertile ſoil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force, ſufficient to tranſport their armies to the coaſt of Aſia[102]. The ſhips uſed in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very ſingular conſtruction. They were ſlight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the leaſt mixture of iron, and occaſionally covered with a ſhelving roof, on the appearance of a tempeſt[103]. In theſe floating houſes, the Goths careleſsly truſted themſelves to the mercy of an unknown ſea, under the conduct of ſailors preſſed into the ſervice, and whoſe ſkill and fidelity were equally ſuſpicious. But the hopes of plunder had baniſhed every idea of danger, and a natural fearleſsneſs of temper ſupplied in their minds the more rational confidence,

who acquire a naval force.

[98] Strabo, l. vii. p. 309. The firſt kings of Boſphorus were the allies of Athens.

[99] Appian in Mithridat.

[100] It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Oroſius, vi. 21. Eutropius, vii. 9. The Romans once advanced within three days march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii. 17.

[101] See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the ſincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation againſt the kings of Boſphorus.

[102] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 28.

[103] Strabo, l. xi. Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 47.—They were called *Camaræ*.

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which is the juſt reſult of knowledge and experience. Warriors of ſuch a daring ſpirit muſt have often murmured againſt the cowardice of their guides, who required the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of a ſettled calm before they would venture to embark; and would ſcarcely ever be tempted to loſe ſight of the land. Such, at leaſt, is the practice of the modern Turks[104]; and they are probably not inferior, in the art of navigation, to the ancient inhabitants of Boſphorus.

First naval expedition of the Goths.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coaſt of Circaſſia on the left hand, firſt appeared before Pityus[105], the utmoſt limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port and fortified with a ſtrong wall. Here they met with a reſiſtance more obſtinate than they had reaſon to expect from the feeble garriſon of a diſtant fortreſs. They were repulſed; and their diſappointment ſeemed to diminiſh the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Succeſſianus, an officer of ſuperior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as ſoon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but leſs important ſtation, they reſumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the deſtruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former diſgrace[106].

The Goths beſiege and take Trebizond.

Circling round the eaſtern extremity of the Euxine ſea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles[107]. The courſe of the Goths carried them in ſight of the country of Colchis, ſo famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without ſucceſs, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phaſis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the ten thouſand as an ancient colony of

[104] See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the xvith letter of Tournefort.

[105] Arrian places the frontier garriſon at Dioſcurias, or Sebaſtopolis, forty-four miles to the eaſt of Pityus. The garriſon of Phaſis conſiſted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine.

[106] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 30.

[107] Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxin. p. 130.) calls the diſtance 2610 ſtadia.

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Greeks[108], derived its wealth and ſplendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had conſtructed an artificial port on a coaſt left deſtitute by nature of ſecure harbours[109]. The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls ſeemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the uſual garriſon had been ſtrengthened by a reinforcement of ten thouſand men. But there are not any advantages capable of ſupplying the abſence of diſcipline and vigilance. The numerous garriſon of Trebizond, diſſolved in riot and luxury, diſdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths ſoon diſcovered the ſupine negligence of the beſieged, erected a lofty pile of faſcines, aſcended the walls in the ſilence of the night, and entered the defenceleſs city, ſword in hand. A general maſſacre of the people enſued, whilſt the affrighted ſoldiers eſcaped through the oppoſite gates of the town. The moſt holy temples, and the moſt ſplendid edifices, were involved in a common deſtruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immenſe: the wealth of the adjacent countries had been depoſited in Trebizond, as in a ſecure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without oppoſition through the extenſive province of Pontus[110]. The rich ſpoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ſhips that had been found in the port. The robuſt youth of the ſea-coaſt were chained to the oar; and the Goths, ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of their firſt naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new eſtabliſhments in the kingdom of Boſphorus[111].

The ſecond expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ſhips; but they ſteered a different courſe, and, diſdaining the exhauſted provinces of Pontus, followed

The ſecond expedition of the Goths.

[108] Xenophon. Anabaſis, l. iv. p. 348. Edit. Hutchinſon.

[109] Arrian, p. 129. The general obſervation is Tournefort's.

[110] See an epiſtle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, biſhop of Neo-Cæſarea, quoted by Maſcou, v. 37.

[111] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 32, 33.

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the weſtern coaſt of the Euxine, paſſed before the wide mouths of the Boryſthenes, the Nieſter, and the Danube, and increaſing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fiſhing barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine ſea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Aſia. The garriſon of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the Strait; and ſo inconſiderable were the dreaded invaſions of the barbarians, that this body of troops ſurpaſſed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they ſurpaſſed it. They deſerted with precipitation their advantageous poſt, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, moſt plentifully ſtored with arms and money, to the diſcretion of the conquerors. Whilſt they heſitated whether they ſhould prefer the ſea or land, Europe or Aſia, for the ſcene of their hoſtilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and eaſy conqueſt. He guided the march, which was only ſixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon[112], directed the reſiſtleſs attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned ſufficient policy to reward the traitor, whom they deteſted. Nice, Pruſa, Apæmæa, Cius, cities that had ſometimes rivalled, or imitated, the ſplendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the ſame calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without controul through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the ſoft inhabitants of Aſia, had aboliſhed the exerciſe of arms, and removed the apprehenſion of danger. The ancient walls were ſuffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the moſt opulent cities was reſerved for the conſtruction of baths, temples, and theatres[113].

They plunder the cities of Bithynia.

[112] Itiner. Hieroſolym. p. 572. Weſſeling. [113] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 32, 33.

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Retreat of the Goths.

When the city of Cyzicus withſtood the utmoſt effort of Mithridates [114], it was diſtinguiſhed by wiſe laws, a naval power of two hundred gallies, and three arſenals; of arms, of military engines, and of corn [115]. It was ſtill the ſeat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient ſtrength, nothing remained except the ſituation, in a little iſland of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Aſia only by two bridges. From the recent ſack of Pruſa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles [116] of the city, which they had devoted to deſtruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The ſeaſon was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reſervoir of all the ſprings of Mount Olympus, roſe to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which iſſues from the lake, ſwelled into a broad and rapid ſtream, and ſtopped the progreſs of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been ſtationed, was attended by a long train of waggons, laden with the ſpoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicodemia, which they wantonly burnt [117]. Some obſcure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that ſecured their retreat [118]. But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox ſummoned them to haſten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is eſteemed by the modern Turks the moſt unqueſtionable inſtance of raſhneſs and folly [119].

Third naval expedition of the Goths.

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Boſphorus, conſiſted of five hundred ſail of ſhips [120],

[114] He beſieged the place with 400 gallies, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. Appian in Mithridat. Cicero pro Lege Manilià, c. 8.

[115] Strabo, l. xii. p. 573.

[116] Pocock's Deſcription of the Eaſt, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

[117] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 33.

[118] Syncellus tells an unintelligible ſtory of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus*.

[119] Voyages de Chardin, tom. i. p. 45. He ſailed with the Turks from Conſtantinople to Caffa.

[120] Syncellus (p. 382.) ſpeaks of this expedition, as undertaken by the Heruli.

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our ready imagination inſtantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are aſſured by the judicious Strabo [121], that the piratical veſſels uſed by the barbarians of Pontus and the Leſſer Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may ſafely affirm, that fifteen thouſand warriors, at the moſt, embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they ſteered their deſtructive courſe from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Boſphorus. When they had almoſt gained the middle of the Straits, they were ſuddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind ſpringing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid ſea, or rather lake of the Propontis. Their landing on the little iſland of Cyzicus, was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence iſſuing again through the narrow paſſage of the Helleſpont, they purſued their winding navigation amidſt the numerous iſlands ſcattered over the Archipelago, or the Ægean Sea. The aſſiſtance of captives and deſerters muſt have been very neceſſary to pilot their veſſels, and to direct their various incurſions, as well on the coaſt of Greece as on that of Aſia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles diſtant from Athens [122], which had attempted to make ſome preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities againſt the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay ſince the time of Sylla. The efforts of his ſkill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became maſters of the native ſeat of the muſes and the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themſelves to the licenſe of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a ſlender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the ſack of

They paſs the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont,

[121] Strabo, l. xi. p. 495.

[122] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 7.

Athens, collected a haſty band of volunteers, peaſants as well as ſoldiers, and in ſome meaſure avenged the calamities of his country [123].

ravage Greece, and threaten Italy.

But this exploit, whatever luſtre it might ſhed on the declining age of Athens, ſerved rather to irritate than to ſubdue the undaunted ſpirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the ſame time in every diſtrict of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged ſuch memorable wars againſt each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by ſea, ſpread from the eaſtern point of Sunium to the weſtern coaſt of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within ſight of Italy, when the approach of ſuch imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleaſure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his preſence ſeems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the ſtrength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the ſervice of Rome, and was inveſted with the ornaments of the conſular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian [124]. Great numbers of the Goths, diſguſted with the perils and hardſhips of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæſia, with a deſign of forcing their way over the Danube to their ſettlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable deſtruction, if the diſcord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an eſcape [125]. The ſmall remainder of this

Their diviſions and retreat.

[123] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181. Victor, c. 33. Oroſius, vii. 42. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 35. Zonaras, l. xii. 635. Syncellus, p. 382. It is not without ſome attention, that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can ſtill diſcover ſome traces of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits.

[124] Syncellus, p. 382. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous.

[125] Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety and acted with ſpirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181.

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deſtroying hoſt returned on board their veſſels; and meaſuring back their way through the Helleſpont and the Boſphorus, ravaged in their paſſage the ſhores of Troy, whoſe fame, immortalized by Homer, will probably ſurvive the memory of the Gothic conqueſts. As ſoon as they found themſelves in ſafety within the baſon of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus; and, after all their toils, indulged themſelves in the uſe of thoſe pleaſant and ſalutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a ſhort and eaſy navigation [126]. Such was the various fate of this third and greateſt of their naval enterpriſes. It may ſeem difficult to conceive, how the original body of fifteen thouſand warriors could ſuſtain the loſſes and diviſions of ſo bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually waſted by the ſword, by ſhipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deſerters, who flocked to the ſtandard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive ſlaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly ſeized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In theſe expeditions, the Gothic nation claimed a ſuperior ſhare of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners, are ſometimes diſtinguiſhed and ſometimes confounded in the imperfect hiſtories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets ſeemed to iſſue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians, was frequently beſtowed on the mixt multitude [127].

Ruin of the temple of Epheſus.

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are paſſed over with careleſs inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Epheſus, after having riſen with increaſing ſplendour from ſeven repeated misfortunes [128], was finally burnt by the Goths

[126] Jornandes, c. 20.

[127] Zoſimus and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris) give the name of Scythians to thoſe whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, conſtantly repreſent as Goths.

[128] Hiſt. Auguſt. p, 178. Jornandes, c. 20.

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in their third naval invaſion. The arts of Greece, and the wealth of Aſia, had conſpired to erect that ſacred and magnificent ſtructure. It was ſupported by an hundred and twenty-ſeven marble columns of the Ionic order. They were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was ſixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the maſterly ſculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, ſelected from the favourite legends of the place the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the ſlaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquiſhed Amazons[129]. Yet the length of the temple of Epheſus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds of the meaſure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome[130]. In the other dimenſions, it was ſtill more inferior to that ſublime production of modern architecture. The ſpreading arms of a Chriſtian croſs require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldeſt artiſts of antiquity would have been ſtartled at the propoſal of raiſing in the air a dome of the ſize and proportions of the pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Succeſſive empires, the Perſian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its ſanctity, and enriched its ſplendour[131]. But the rude ſavages of the Baltic were deſtitute of a taſte for the elegant arts, and they deſpiſed the ideal terrors of a foreign ſuperſtition[132].

Another circumſtance is related of theſe invaſions, which might deſerve our notice, were it not juſtly to be ſuſpected as the fanciful

Conduct of the Goths at Athens.

[129] Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. 1. præfat. l. vii. Tacit. Annal. iii. 61. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xxxvi. 14.

[130] The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is very little ſhort of nine Engliſh inches. See Greave's Miſcellanies, vol. i. p. 233; On the Roman foot.

[131] The policy, however, of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the ſanctuary or aſylum, which by ſucceſſive privileges had ſpread itſelf two ſtadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.

[132] They offered no ſacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epiſtol. Gregor. Thaumat.

conceit

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conceit of a recent ſophiſt. We are told, that in the ſack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of ſetting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, diſſuaded them from the deſign; by the profound obſervation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the ſtudy of books, they would never apply themſelves to the exerciſe of arms [133]. The ſagacious counſellor (ſhould the truth of the fact be admitted) reaſoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the moſt polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has diſplayed itſelf about the ſame period; and the age of ſcience has generally been the age of military virtue and ſucceſs.

Conqueſt of Armenia by the Perſians.

IV. The new ſovereigns of Perſia, Artaxerxes and his ſon Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already ſeen) over the houſe of Arſaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Choſroes, king of Armenia, had alone preſerved both his life and his independence. He defended himſelf by the natural ſtrength of his country; by the perpetual reſort of fugitives and malecontents; by the alliance of the Romans, and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms, during a thirty years war, he was at length aſſaſſinated by the emiſſaries of Sapor king of Perſia. The patriotic ſatraps of Armenia, who aſſerted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates the lawful heir. But the ſon of Choſroes was an infant, the allies were at a diſtance, and the Perſian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irreſiſtible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was ſaved by the fidelity of a ſervant, and Armenia continued above twenty-ſeven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy

[133] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 635. Such an anecdote was perfectly ſuited to the taſte of Montaigne. He makes uſe of it in his agreeable Eſſay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24.

of

of Perſia [134]. Elated with this eaſy conqueſt, and preſuming on the diſtreſſes or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the ſtrong garriſons of Carrhæ and Niſibis to ſurrender, and ſpread devaſtation and terror on either ſide of the Euphrates.

Valerian marches into the Eaſt.

The loſs of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid ſucceſs of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep ſenſe of the inſult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himſelf, that the vigilance of his lieutenants would ſufficiently provide for the ſafety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he reſolved, notwithſtanding his advanced age, to march in perſon to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progreſs through Aſia Minor, the naval enterpriſes of the Goths were ſuſpended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a tranſient and fallacious calm. He paſſed the Euphrates, encountered the Perſian monarch near the walls of Edeſſa, was vanquiſhed, and taken priſoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly repreſented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may diſcover a long ſeries of imprudence, of error, and of deſerved misfortunes on the ſide of the Roman emperor. He repoſed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian præfect [135]. That worthleſs miniſter rendered his maſter formidable only to the oppreſſed ſubjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome [136]. By his weak or wicked counſels, the Imperial army was betrayed into a ſituation, where valour and military ſkill were equally unavailing [137]. The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Perſian hoſt was repulſed with great ſlaughter [138]; and Sapor, who encompaſſed the camp with ſuperior numbers, patiently

Is defeated and taken priſoner by Sapor king of Perſia. A. D. 260.

[134] Moſes Chorenenſis, l. ii. c. 71. 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628. The authentic relation of the Armenian hiſtorian ſerves to rectify the confuſed account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himſelf an infant.

[135] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 191. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Chriſtians, they charged him with being a magician.

[136] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 33.

[137] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 174.

[138] Victor. in Cæſar. Eutropius, ix. 7.

waited

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waited till the increaſing rage of famine and peſtilence had enſured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions ſoon accuſed Valerian as the cauſe of their calamities; their ſeditious clamours demanded an inſtant capitulation. An immenſe ſum of gold was offered to purchaſe the permiſſion of a diſgraceful retreat. But the Perſian, conſcious of his ſuperiority, refuſed the money with diſdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and inſiſted on a perſonal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the neceſſity of intruſting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a priſoner, and his aſtoniſhed troops laid down their arms[139]. In ſuch a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a ſucceſſor entirely dependent on his pleaſure. Cyriades, an obſcure fugitive of Antioch, ſtained with every vice, was choſen to diſhonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Perſian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army[140].

Sapor overruns Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

The imperial ſlave was eager to ſecure the favour of his maſter, by an act of treaſon to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and by the way of Chalcis to the metropolis of the Eaſt. So rapid were the motions of the Perſian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious hiſtorian[141], the city of Antioch was ſurpriſed when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amuſements of the theatre. The ſplendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or deſtroyed; and the nume-

[139] Zoſimus, *l.* i. p. 33. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.

[140] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 185. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable ſeries of events to the doubtful chronology of a moſt inaccurate writer.

[141] The ſack of Antioch, anticipated by ſome hiſtorian, is aſſigned, by the deciſive teſtimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5.

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rous inhabitants were put to the ſword, or led away into captivity[142]. The tide of devaſtation was ſtopped for a moment by the reſolution of the high prieſt of Emeſa. Arrayed in his ſacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peaſants, armed only with ſlings, and defended his god and his property from the ſacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaſter[143]. But the ruin of Tarſus, and of many other cities, furniſhes a melancholy proof that, except in this ſingular inſtance, the conqueſt of Syria and Cilicia ſcarcely interrupted the progreſs of the Perſian arms. The advantages of the narrow paſſes of mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whoſe principal force conſiſted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was permitted to form the ſiege of Cæſarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the ſecond rank, which was ſuppoſed to contain four hundred thouſand inhabitants. Demoſthenes commanded in the place, not ſo much by the commiſſion of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at laſt Cæſarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a phyſician, he cut his way through the Perſians, who had been ordered to exert their utmoſt diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief eſcaped the power of a foe, who might either have honoured or puniſhed his obſtinate valour; but many thouſands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general maſſacre, and Sapor is accuſed of treating his priſoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty[144]. Much ſhould undoubtedly be allowed for national animoſity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain, that the ſame prince, who, in Armenia, had diſplayed the mild aſpect of a legiſlator, ſhewed himſelf to the Ro-

[142] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 35.

[143] John Malala, tom. i. p. 391. He corrupts this probable event by ſome fabulous circumſtances.

[144] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Deep vallies were filled up with the ſlain. Crowds of priſoners were driven to water like beaſts, and many periſhed for want of food.

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mans under the ſtern features of a conqueror. He deſpaired of making any permanent eſtabliſhment in the empire, and fought only to leave behind him a waſted deſert, whilſt he tranſported into Perſia the people and the treaſures of the provinces [145].

Boldneſs and ſucceſs of Odenathus againſt Sapor.

At the time when the Eaſt trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a preſent not unworthy of the greateſt kings; a long train of camels laden with the moſt rare and valuable merchandiſes. The rich offering was accompanied with an epiſtle, reſpectful but not ſervile, from Odenathus, one of the nobleſt and moſt opulent ſenators of Palmyra. "Who is this Odenathus (ſaid the haughty Victor, "and he commanded that the preſents ſhould be caſt into the Euphrates), that he thus inſolently preſumes to write to his lord? If "he entertains a hope of mitigating his puniſhment, let him fall proſtrate before the foot of our throne with his hands bound behind "his back. Should he heſitate, ſwift deſtruction ſhall be poured "on his head, on his whole race, and on his country [146]." The deſperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced, called into action all the latent powers of his ſoul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infuſing his own ſpirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria [147], and the tents of the deſert [148], he hovered round the Perſian hoſt, haraſſed their retreat, carried off part of the treaſure, and, what was dearer than any treaſure, ſeveral of the women of the Great King; who was at laſt obliged to repaſs the Euphrates with ſome marks of haſte and confuſion [149]. By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and for-

[145] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 25. aſſerts, that Sapor, had he not preferred ſpoil to conqueſt, might have remained maſter of Aſia.

[146] Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29.

[147] Syrorum agreſtium manû. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus, Victor, the Auguſtan Hiſtory (p. 192.), and ſeveral inſcriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.

[148] He poſſeſſed ſo powerful an intereſt among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Perſic. l. ii. c. 5.) and John Malala (tom. i. p. 391.) ſtyle him Prince of the Saracens.

[149] Peter Patricius, p. 25.

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tunes. The majeſty of Rome, oppreſſed by a Perſian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

Treatment of Valerian.

The voice of hiſtory, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuſe of the rights of conqueſt. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but inveſted with the Imperial purple, was expoſed to the multitude a conſtant ſpectacle of fallen greatneſs; and that whenever the Perſian monarch mounted on horſeback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithſtanding all the remonſtrances of his allies, who repeatedly adviſed him to remember the viciſſitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illuſtrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of inſult, Sapor ſtill remained inflexible. When Valerian ſunk under the weight of ſhame and grief, his ſkin, ſtuffed with ſtraw, and formed into the likeneſs of a human figure, was preſerved for ages in the moſt celebrated temple of Perſia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of braſs and marble ſo often erected by Roman vanity[150]. The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in queſtion. The letters ſtill extant from the princes of the Eaſt to Sapor, are manifeſt forgeries[151]; nor is it natural to ſuppoſe that a jealous monarch ſhould, even in the perſon of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majeſty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Perſia, it is at leaſt certain, that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languiſhed away his life in hopeleſs captivity.

[150] The Pagan writers lament, the Chriſtian inſult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various teſtimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preſerved of eaſtern hiſtory before Mahomet, that the modern Perſians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event ſo glorious to their nation. See Bibliotheque Orientale.

[151] One of theſe epiſtles is from Artavaſdes, king of Armenia: ſince Armenia was then a province in Perſia, the king, the kingdom, and the epiſtle, muſt be fictitious.

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Character and adminiſtration of Gallienus.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long ſupported with impatience the cenſorial ſeverity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with ſecret pleaſure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a mortal," ſaid he, "and ſince he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am ſatisfied." Whilſt Rome lamented the fate of her ſovereign, the ſavage coldneſs of his ſon was extolled by the ſervile courtiers, as the perfect firmneſs of a hero and a ſtoic[152]. It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconſtant character of Gallienus, which he diſplayed without conſtraint, as ſoon as he became ſole poſſeſſor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius enabled him to ſucceed; and as his genius was deſtitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a maſter of ſeveral curious but uſeleſs ſciences, a ready orator, and elegant poet[153], a ſkilful gardener, an excellent cook, and moſt contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the ſtate required his preſence and attention, he was engaged in converſation with the philoſopher Plotinus[154], waſting his time in trifling or licentious pleaſures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian myſteries, or ſoliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuſe magnificence inſulted the general poverty; the ſolemn ridicule of his triumphs impreſſed a deeper ſenſe of the public diſgrace[155]. The repeated

[152] See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[153] There is ſtill extant a very pretty Epithalamium, compoſed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews.

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter ſudate medullis
Omnibus, inter vos; non murmura veſtra columbæ,
Brachia non Hederæ, non vincant oſcula Conchæ.

[154] He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania, to try the experiment of realizing Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Græc. l. iv.

[155] A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverſe; the former *Gallienæ Auguſtæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax*. M. Spanheim ſuppoſes that the coin was ſtruck by ſome of the enemies of Gallienus, and was deſigned as a ſevere ſatire on that effeminate prince. But as the uſe of irony may ſeem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a paſſage of Trebellius Pollio (Hiſt.

peated intelligence of invaſions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careleſs ſmile; and ſingling out, with affected contempt, ſome particular production of the loſt province, he careleſsly aſked, whether Rome muſt be ruined, unleſs it was ſupplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few ſhort moments in the life of Galienus, when, exaſperated by ſome recent injury, he ſuddenly appeared the intrepid ſoldier, and the cruel tyrant; till ſatiated with blood, or fatigued by reſiſtance, he inſenſibly ſunk into the natural mildneſs and indolence of his character[156].

The thirty tyrants.

At a time when the reins of government were held with ſo looſe a hand, it is not ſurpriſing, that a crowd of uſurpers ſhould ſtart up in every province of the empire againſt the ſon of Valerian. It was probably ſome ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Auguſtan hiſtory to ſelect that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation[157]. But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What reſemblance can we diſcover between a council of thirty perſons, the united oppreſſors of a ſingle city, and an uncertain liſt of independent rivals, who roſe and fell in irregular ſucceſſion through the extent of a vaſt empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unleſs we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, diſtracted

(Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 198.) an ingenious and natural ſolution. *Galliena* was firſt couſin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the uſurper Celſus, ſhe deſerved the title of Auguſta. On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a ſimilar inſcription of *Fauſtina Auguſta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is eaſily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who ſeized, perhaps, the occaſion of ſome momentary calm. See Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres. Janvier 1700. p. 21—34.

[156] This ſingular character has, I believe, been fairly tranſmitted to us. The reign of his immediate ſucceſſor was ſhort and buſy; and the hiſtorians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Conſtantine, could not have the moſt remote intereſt to miſrepreſent the character of Gallienus.

[157] Pollio expreſſes the moſt minute anxiety to complete the number.

as

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as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne; Cyriades, Macrianus, Baliſta, Odenathus, and Zenobia in the eaſt; in Gaul, and the weſtern provinces, Poſthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus[158], Saturninus; in Iſauria, Trebellianus; Piſo in Theſſaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celſus in Africa. To illuſtrate the obſcure monuments of the life and death of each individual, would prove a laborious taſk, alike barren of inſtruction and of amuſement. We may content ourſelves with inveſtigating ſome general characters, that moſt ſtrongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretenſions, their motives, their fate, and the deſtructive conſequences of their uſurpation[159].

Their real number was no more than nineteen.

Character and merit of the tyrants.

It is ſufficiently known, that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to expreſs the illegal ſeizure of ſupreme power, without any reference to the abuſe of it. Several of the pretenders, who raiſed the ſtandard of rebellion againſt the emperor Gallienus, were ſhining models of virtue, and almoſt all poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the moſt important commands of the empire. The generals, who aſſumed the title of Auguſtus, were either reſpected by their troops for their able conduct and ſevere diſcipline, or admired for valour and ſucceſs in war, or beloved for frankneſs and generoſity. The field of victory was often the ſcene of their election; and even the armourer Marius, the moſt contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was diſtinguiſhed however by

[158] The place of his reign is ſomewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the ſeat of all the others.

[159] Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them ſomewhat differently.

intrepid

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intrepid courage, matchleſs ſtrength, and blunt honeſty [160]. His mean and recent trade caſt indeed an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obſcure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peaſants, and inliſted in the army as private ſoldiers. In times of confuſion, every active genius finds the place aſſigned him by Nature: in a general ſtate of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatneſs. Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus only was a ſenator; Piſo alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight ſucceſſive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piſo [161], who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his houſe, the images of Craſſus and of the great Pompey [162]. His anceſtors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could beſtow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had ſurvived the tyranny of the Cæſars. The perſonal qualities of Piſo added new luſtre to his race. The uſurper Valens, by whoſe order he was killed, confeſſed, with deep remorſe, that even an enemy ought to have reſpected the ſanctity of Piſo; and although he died in arms againſt Gallienus, the ſenate, with the emperor's generous permiſſion, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of ſo virtuous a rebel [163].

Their obſcure birth.

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they eſteemed. They diſdained to ſerve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy ſon. The throne of the Roman world was unſup-

The cauſes of their rebellion.

[160] See the ſpeech of Marius, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 197. The accidental identity of names was the only circumſtance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Salluſt.

[161] Vos, O Pompilius ſanguis! is Horace's addreſs to the Piſos. See Art. Poet. v. 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

[162] Tacit. Annal. xv. 48. Hiſt. i. 15. In the former of theſe paſſages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Auguſtus to Alexander Severus, one or more Piſos appear as conſuls. A Piſo was deemed worthy of the throne by Auguſtus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13.). A ſecond headed a formidable conſpiracy againſt Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæſar by Galba.

[163] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 195. The ſenate, in a moment of enthuſiaſm, ſeems to have preſumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

ported

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ported by any principle of loyalty; and treaſon, againſt ſuch a prince, might eaſily be conſidered as patriotiſm to the ſtate. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of theſe uſurpers, it will appear, that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel ſuſpicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deſerving of the purple, they were marked for ſure deſtruction; and even prudence would counſel them, to ſecure a ſhort enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war, than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the ſoldiers inveſted the reluctant victims with the enſigns of ſovereign authority, they ſometimes mourned in ſecret their approaching fate. "You have loſt," ſaid Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have loſt a uſeful commander, and you have made a very "wretched emperor[164].

Their violent deaths.

The apprehenſions of Saturninus were juſtified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who ſtarted up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As ſoon as they were inveſted with the bloody purple, they inſpired their adherents with the ſame fears and ambition which had occaſioned their own revolt. Encompaſſed with domeſtic conſpiracy, military ſedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or ſhorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably loſt. Theſe precarious monarchs received, however, ſuch honours, as the flattery of their reſpective armies and provinces could beſtow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the ſanction of law or hiſtory. Italy, Rome, and the ſenate, conſtantly adhered to the cauſe of Gallienus, and he alone was conſidered as the ſovereign of

[164] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196.

the

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the empire. That prince condeſcended indeed to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deſerved the honourable diſtinction, by the reſpectful conduct which he always maintained towards the ſon of Valerian. With the general applauſe of the Romans, and the conſent of Gallienus, the ſenate conferred the title of Auguſtus on the brave Palmyrenian; and ſeemed to intruſt him with the government of the Eaſt, which he already poſſeſſed, in ſo independent a manner, that, like a private ſucceſſion, he bequeathed it to his illuſtrious widow Zenobia [165].

Fatal conſequences of theſe uſurpations.

The rapid and perpetual tranſitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amuſed an indifferent philoſopher; were it poſſible for a philoſopher to remain indifferent amidſt the general calamities of human kind. The election of theſe precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally deſtructive to their ſubjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was inſtantly diſcharged to the troops, by an immenſe donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhauſted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themſelves reduced to the hard neceſſity of ſupporting their uſurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is ſtill extant a moſt ſavage mandate from Gallienus to one of his miniſters, after the ſuppreſſion of Ingenuus, who had aſſumed the purple in Illyricum. "It is not enough," ſays that ſoft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate ſuch as have appeared in "arms: the chance of battle might have ſerved me as effectually. "The male ſex of every age muſt be extirpated; provided that, in "the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive "means to ſave our reputation. Let every one die who has dropt

[165] The aſſociation of the brave Palmyrenian was the moſt popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 180.

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" an expreſſion, who has entertained a thought againſt me, againſt " *me*, the ſon of Valerian, the father and brother of ſo many " princes [166]. Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, " kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and " would inſpire you with my own feelings [167]." Whilſt the public forces of the ſtate were diſſipated in private quarrels, the defenceleſs provinces lay expoſed to every invader. The braveſt uſurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their ſituation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchaſe with oppreſſive tributes the neutrality or ſervices of the barbarians, and to introduce hoſtile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy [168].

Such were the barbarians, and ſuch the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, diſmembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the loweſt pitch of diſgrace and ruin, from whence it ſeemed impoſſible that it ſhould ever emerge. As far as the barrenneſs of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perſpicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There ſtill remain ſome particular facts; I. The diſorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and, III. The rebellion of the Iſaurians, which may ſerve to reflect a ſtrong light on the horrid picture.

Diſorders of Sicily.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by ſucceſs and impunity, publicly defy, inſtead of eluding the juſtice of their country, we may ſafely infer, that the exceſſive weakneſs of the

[166] Gallienus had given the titles of Cæſar and Auguſtus to his ſon Saloninus, ſlain at Cologn by the uſurper Poſthumus. A ſecond ſon of Gallienus ſucceeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was alſo aſſociated to the empire: ſeveral other brothers, ſiſters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor, formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii. and M. de Brequigny in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

[167] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 188.

[168] Regillianus had ſome bands of Roxolani in his ſervice. Poſthumus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themſelves into Spain.

government

government is felt and abuſed by the loweſt ranks of the community. The ſituation of Sicily preſerved it from the barbarians; nor could the diſarmed province have ſupported an uſurper. The ſufferings of that once flouriſhing and ſtill fertile iſland, were inflicted by baſer hands. A licentious crowd of ſlaves and peaſants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the ſervile wars of more ancient times [169]. Devaſtations, of which the huſbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, muſt have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal eſtates were the property of the opulent ſenators of Rome, who often encloſed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable, that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply, than all the conqueſts of the Goths or the Perſians.

Tumults of Alexandria.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble deſign, at once conceived and executed by the ſon of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, ſecond only to Rome itſelf, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles [170]; it was peopled by three hundred thouſand free inhabitants, beſides at leaſt an equal number of ſlaves [171]. The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria, to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleneſs was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glaſs, others in weaving of linen, others again manufacturing the papyrus. Either ſex, and every age, was engaged in the purſuits of induſtry, nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations ſuited to their condition [172]. But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconſtancy of the Greeks, with the ſuperſtition and obſtinacy of the Egyptians. The moſt trifling occaſion, a tranſient ſcarcity of fleſh or lentils, the

[169] The Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 177, calls it *ſervile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv.

[170] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. v. 10.

[171] Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. p. 590. Edit. Weſſeling.

[172] See a very curious letter of Hadrian, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 245.

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neglect of an accuſtomed ſalutation, a miſtake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious diſpute [173], were at any time ſufficient to kindle a ſedition among that vaſt multitude, whoſe reſentments were furious and implacable [174]. After the captivity of Valerian and the inſolence of his ſon had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themſelves to the ungoverned rage of their paſſions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few ſhort and ſuſpicious truces) above twelve years [175]. All intercourſe was cut off between the ſeveral quarters of the afflicted city, every ſtreet was polluted with blood, every building of ſtrength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults ſubſide, till a conſiderable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The ſpacious and magnificent diſtrict of Bruchion, with its palaces and muſæum, the reſidence of the kings and philoſophers of Egypt, is deſcribed above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its preſent ſtate of dreary ſolitude [176].

Rebellion of the Iſaurians.

III. The obſcure rebellion of Trebellianus, who aſſumed the purple in Iſauria, a petty province of Aſia Minor, was attended with ſtrange and memorable conſequences. The pageant of royalty was ſoon deſtroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, deſpairing of mercy, reſolved to ſhake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and ſuddenly returned to the ſavage manners, from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide extended Taurus, protected their inacceſſible retreat. The tillage of ſome fertile vallies [177] ſupplied them with neceſſaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy,

[173] Such as the ſacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. i.

[174] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 195. This long and terrible ſedition was firſt occaſioned by a diſpute between a ſoldier and a townſman about a pair of ſhoes.

[175] Dionyſius apud Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. vol. vii. p. 21. Ammian. xxii. 16.

[176] Scaliger Animadver. ad Euſeb. Chron. p. 258. Three diſſertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mem. de l'Academie, tom. ix.

[177] Strabo, l. xii. p. 569.

the Iſaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience, either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakneſs, by ſurrounding the hoſtile and independent ſpot, with a ſtrong chain of fortifications [178], which often proved inſufficient to reſtrain the incurſions of theſe domeſtic foes. The Iſaurians, gradually extending their territory to the ſea-coaſt, ſubdued the weſtern and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the neſt of thoſe daring pirates, againſt whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmoſt force, under the conduct of the great Pompey [179].

Famine and peſtilence.

Our habits of thinking ſo fondly connect the order of the univerſe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of hiſtory has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkneſs, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated [180]. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more ſerious kind. It was the inevitable conſequence of rapine and oppreſſion, which extirpated the produce of the preſent, and the hope of future harveſts. Famine is almoſt always followed by epidemical diſeaſes, the effect of ſcanty and unwholeſome food. Other cauſes muſt however have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year two hundred and fifty, to the year two hundred and ſixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almoſt every family, of the Roman empire. During ſome time five thouſand perſons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had eſcaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated [181].

Diminution of the human ſpecies.

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumſtance, of ſome uſe perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An

[178] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 197.

[179] See Cellarius, Georg. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137. upon the limits of Iſauria.

[180] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 177.

[181] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 177. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 24. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 623. Euſeb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæſar. Eutropius, ix. 5. Oroſius, vii. 21.

exact

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exact regiſter was kept at Alexandria, of all the citizens entitled to receive the diſtribution of corn. It was found, that the ancient number of thoſe compriſed between the ages of forty and ſeventy, had been equal to the whole ſum of claimants, from fourteen to fourſcore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus [182]. Applying this authentic fact to the moſt correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had periſhed; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might ſuſpect, that war, peſtilence, and famine, had conſumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human ſpecies [183].

[182] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionyſius, who, in the time of thoſe troubles, was biſhop of Alexandria.

[183] In a great number of pariſhes 11,000 perſons were found between fourteen and eighty; 5365 between forty and ſeventy. See Buffon, Hiſtoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

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Reign of Claudius.—Defeat of the Goths.—Victories, Triumph, and Death, of Aurelian.

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UNDER the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppreſſed and almoſt deſtroyed by the ſoldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians. It was ſaved by a ſeries of great princes, who derived their obſcure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within a period of about thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian and his colleagues, triumphed over the foreign and domeſtic enemies of the ſtate, re-eſtabliſhed, with the military diſcipline, the ſtrength of the frontiers, and deſerved the glorious title of Reſtorers of the Roman world.

Aureolus invades Italy, is defeated and beſieged at Milan.

The removal of an effeminate tyrant made way for a ſucceſſion of heroes. The indignation of the people imputed all their calamities to Gallienus, and the far greater part were, indeed, the conſequence of his diſſolute manners and careleſs adminiſtration. He was even deſtitute of a ſenſe of honour, which ſo frequently ſupplies the abſence of public virtue; and as long as he was permitted to enjoy the poſſeſſion of Italy, a victory of the barbarians, the loſs of a province, or the rebellion of a general, ſeldom diſturbed the tranquil courſe of his pleaſures. At length, a conſiderable army, ſtationed on the Upper Danube, inveſted with the Imperial purple their leader Aureolus; who diſdaining a confined and barren reign over the mountains of Rhætia, paſſed the Alps, occupied Milan, threatened Rome, and challenged Gallienus to diſpute in the field the ſovereignty of Italy. The emperor, provoked by the inſult, and alarmed by the inſtant danger, ſuddenly exerted that latent vigour, which ſometimes broke through the indolence of his temper. Forcing himſelf

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himſelf from the luxury of the palace, he appeared in arms at the head of his legions, and advanced beyond the Po to encounter his competitor. The corrupted name of Pontirolo [1] ſtill preſerves the memory of a bridge over the Adda, which, during the action, muſt have proved an object of the utmoſt importance to both armies. The Rhætian uſurper, after receiving a total defeat and a dangerous wound, retired into Milan. The ſiege of that great city was immediately formed; the walls were battered with every engine in uſe among the ancients; and Aureolus, doubtful of his internal ſtrength, and hopeleſs of foreign ſuccours, already anticipated the fatal conſequences of unſucceſsful rebellion.

His laſt reſource was an attempt to ſeduce the loyalty of the beſiegers. He ſcattered libels through their camp, inviting the troops to deſert an unworthy maſter, who ſacrificed the public happineſs to his luxury, and the lives of his moſt valuable ſubjects to the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions. The arts of Aureolus diffuſed fears and diſcontent among the principal officers of his rival. A conſpiracy was formed by Heraclianus the Prætorian præfect, by Marcian a general of rank and reputation, and by Cecrops, who commanded a numerous body of Dalmatian guards. The death of Gallienus was reſolved; and notwithſtanding their deſire of firſt terminating the ſiege of Milan, the extreme danger which accompanied every moment's delay, obliged them to haſten the execution of their daring purpoſe. At a late hour of the night, but while the emperor ſtill protracted the pleaſures of the table, an alarm was ſuddenly given, that Aureolus, at the head of all his forces, had made a deſperate ſally from the town; Gallienus, who was never deficient in perſonal bravery, ſtarted from his ſilken couch, and, without allowing himſelf

[1] *Pons Aureoli*, thirteen miles from Bergamo, and thirty-two from Milan. See Cluver. Italia Antiq. tom. i. p. 245. Near this place, in the year 1703, the obſtinate battle of Caſſano was fought between the French and Auſtrians. The excellent relation of the Chevalier de Folard, who was preſent, gives a very diſtinct idea of the ground. See Polybe de Folard, tom. iii. p. 223—248.

time

time either to put on his armour, or to aſſemble his guards, he mounted on horſeback, and rode full ſpeed toward the ſuppoſed place of the attack. Encompaſſed by his declared or concealed enemies, he ſoon, amidſt the nocturnal tumult, received a mortal dart from an uncertain hand. Before he expired, a patriotic ſentiment riſing in the mind of Gallienus, induced him to name a deſerving ſucceſſor, and it was his laſt requeſt, that the Imperial ornaments ſhould be delivered to Claudius, who then commanded a detached army in the neighbourhood of Pavia. The report at leaſt was diligently propagated, and the order cheerfully obeyed by the conſpirators, who had already agreed to place Claudius on the throne. On the firſt news of the emperor's death, the troops expreſſed ſome ſuſpicion and reſentment, till the one was removed, and the other aſſuaged, by a donative of twenty pieces of gold to each ſoldier. They then ratified the election, and acknowledged the merit of their new ſovereign[2].

A. D. 268. March 20. Death of Gallienus.

The obſcurity which covered the origin of Claudius, though it was afterwards embelliſhed by ſome flattering fictions[3], ſufficiently betrays the meanneſs of his birth. We can only diſcover that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering on the Danube; that his youth was ſpent in arms, and that his modeſt valour attracted the favour and confidence of Decius. The ſenate and people already conſidered him as an excellent officer, equal to the moſt important truſts; and cenſured the inattention of Valerian, who ſuffered him to remain in the ſubordinate ſtation of a tribune. But it was not long before that emperor diſtinguiſhed the merit of Claudius, by declaring him general and chief of the Illyrian frontier, with the command of

Character and elevation of the emperor Claudius

[2] On the death of Gallienus, ſee Trebellius Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 37. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 634. Eutrop. ix. 11. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæſar. I have compared and blended them all, but have chiefly followed Aurelius Victor, who ſeems to have had the beſt memoirs.

[3] Some ſuppoſed him, oddly enough, to be a baſtard of the younger Gordian. Others took advantage of the province of Dardania, to deduce his origin from Dardanus, and the ancient kings of Troy.

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all the troops in Thrace, Mæſia, Dacia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia, the appointments of the præfect of Egypt, the eſtabliſhment of the proconſul of Africa, and the ſure proſpect of the conſulſhip. By his victories over the Goths, he deſerved from the ſenate the honour of a ſtatue, and excited the jealous apprehenſions of Gallienus. It was impoſſible that a ſoldier could eſteem ſo diſſolute a ſovereign, nor is it eaſy to conceal a juſt contempt. Some unguarded expreſſions which dropt from Claudius, were officiouſly tranſmitted to the royal ear. The emperor's anſwer to an officer of confidence, deſcribes in very lively colours his own character and that of the times. "There is not "any thing capable of giving me more ſerious concern, than the in-"telligence contained in your laſt diſpatch[4]; that ſome malicious "ſuggeſtions have indiſpoſed towards us the mind of our friend and "*parent* Claudius. As you regard your allegiance, uſe every means "to appeaſe his reſentment, but conduct your negociation with ſe-"crecy; let it not reach the knowledge of the Dacian troops; they "are already provoked, and it might inflame their fury. I myſelf "have ſent him ſome preſents: be it your care that he accept them "with pleaſure. Above all, let him not ſuſpect that I am made ac-"quainted with his imprudence. The fear of my anger might urge "him to deſperate counſels[5]." The preſents which accompanied this humble epiſtle, in which the monarch ſolicited a reconciliation with his diſcontented ſubject, conſiſted of a conſiderable ſum of money, a ſplendid wardrobe, and a valuable ſervice of ſilver and gold plate. By ſuch arts Gallienus ſoftened the indignation, and diſpelled the fears, of his Illyrian general; and, during the remainder of that reign, the formidable ſword of Claudius was always drawn in the cauſe of a maſter whom he deſpiſed. At laſt, indeed, he received from the

[4] *Notoria*, a periodical and official diſpatch which the Emperors received from the *frumentarii* or agents diſperſed through the provinces. Of theſe we may ſpeak hereafter.

[5] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 208. Gallienus deſcribes the plate, veſtments, &c. like a man who loved and underſtood thoſe ſplendid trifles.

conſpirators.

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conſpirators the bloody purple of Gallienus: but he had been abſent from their camp and counſels; and however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly preſume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it[6]. When Claudius aſcended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age.

Death of Aureolus.

The ſiege of Milan was ſtill continued, and Aureolus ſoon diſcovered, that the ſucceſs of his artifices had only raiſed up a more determined adverſary. He attempted to negociate with Claudius a treaty of alliance and partition. "Tell him," replied the intrepid emperor, "that ſuch propoſals ſhould have been made to Gallienus; "*he*, perhaps, might have liſtened to them with patience, and ac- "cepted a colleague as deſpicable as himſelf[7]." This ſtern refuſal, and a laſt unſucceſsful effort, obliged Aureolus to yield the city and himſelf to the diſcretion of the conqueror. The judgment of the army pronounced him worthy of death, and Claudius, after a feeble reſiſtance, conſented to the execution of the ſentence. Nor was the zeal of the ſenate leſs ardent in the cauſe of their new ſovereign. They ratified, perhaps with a ſincere tranſport of zeal, the election of Claudius; and as his predeceſſor had ſhewn himſelf the perſonal enemy of their order, they exerciſed under the name of juſtice a ſevere revenge againſt his friends and family. The ſenate was permitted to diſcharge the ungrateful office of puniſhment, and the emperor reſerved for himſelf the pleaſure and merit of obtaining by his interceſſion a general act of indemnity[8].

Clemency and juſtice of Claudius.

Such oſtentatious clemency diſcovers leſs of the real character of Claudius, than a trifling circumſtance in which he ſeems to have con-

[6] Julian (Orat. i. p. 6.) affirms that Claudius acquired the empire in a juſt and even holy manner. But we may diſtruſt the partiality of a kinſman.

[7] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 203. There are ſome trifling differences concerning the circumſtances of the laſt defeat and death of Aureolus.

[8] Aurelius Victor in Gallien. The people loudly prayed for the damnation of Gallienus. The ſenate decreed that his relations and ſervants ſhould be thrown down headlong from the Gemonian ſtairs. An obnoxious officer of the revenue had his eyes torn out whilſt under examination.

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ſulted only the dictates of his heart. The frequent rebellions of the provinces had involved almoſt every perſon in the guilt of treaſon, almoſt every eſtate in the caſe of confiſcation; and Gallienus often diſplayed his liberality, by diſtributing among his officers the property of his ſubjects. On the acceſſion of Claudius, an old woman threw herſelf at his feet, and complained that a general of the late emperor had obtained an arbitrary grant of her patrimony. This general was Claudius himſelf, who had not entirely eſcaped the contagion of the times. The emperor bluſhed at the reproach, but deſerved the confidence which ſhe had repoſed in his equity. The confeſſion of his fault was accompanied with immediate and ample reſtitution[9].

He undertakes the reformation of the army.

In the arduous taſk which Claudius had undertaken, of reſtoring the empire to its ancient ſplendour, it was firſt neceſſary to revive among his troops a ſenſe of order and obedience. With the authority of a veteran commander, he repreſented to them, that the relaxation of diſcipline had introduced a long train of diſorders, the effects of which were at length experienced by the ſoldiers themſelves; that a people ruined by oppreſſion, and indolent from deſpair, could no longer ſupply a numerous army with the means of luxury, or even of ſubſiſtence; that the danger of each individual had increaſed with the deſpotiſm of the military order, ſince princes who tremble on the throne, will guard their ſafety by the inſtant ſacrifice of every obnoxious ſubject. The emperor expatiated on the miſchiefs of a lawleſs caprice which the ſoldiers could only gratify at the expence of their own blood; as their ſeditious elections had ſo frequently been followed by civil wars, which conſumed the flower of the legions either in the field of battle or in the cruel abuſe of victory. He painted in the moſt lively colours the exhauſted ſtate of the treaſury, the deſolation of the provinces, the diſgrace of the Roman name, and the inſolent triumph of rapacious barbarians. It

[9] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 137.

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was againſt thoſe barbarians, he declared, that he intended to point the firſt effort of their arms. Tetricus might reign for a while over the Weſt, and even Zenobia might preſerve the dominion of the Eaſt[10]. Theſe uſurpers were his perſonal adverſaries; nor could he think of indulging any private reſentment till he had ſaved an empire, whoſe impending ruin would, unleſs it was timely prevented, cruſh both the army and the people.

A. D. 269. The Goths invade the empire.

The various nations of Germany and Sarmatia, who fought under the Gothic ſtandard, had already collected an armament more formidable than any which had yet iſſued from the Euxine. On the banks of the Nieſter, one of the great rivers that diſcharge themſelves into that ſea, they conſtructed a fleet of two thouſand, or even of ſix thouſand veſſels[11]; numbers which, however incredible they may ſeem, would have been inſufficient to tranſport their pretended army of three hundred and twenty thouſand barbarians. Whatever might be the real ſtrength of the Goths, the vigour and ſucceſs of the expedition were not adequate to the greatneſs of the preparations. In their paſſage through the Boſphorus, the unſkilful pilots were overpowered by the violence of the current; and while the multitude of their ſhips were crowded in a narrow channel, many were daſhed againſt each other, or againſt the ſhore. The barbarians made ſeveral deſcents on the coaſts both of Europe and Aſia; but the open country was already plundered, and they were repulſed with ſhame and loſs from the fortified cities which they aſſaulted. A ſpirit of diſcouragement and diviſion aroſe in the fleet, and ſome of their chiefs ſailed away towards the iſlands of Crete and Cyprus; but the main body purſuing a more ſteady courſe, anchored at length near the foot of mount Athos, and aſſaulted the city of Theſſalonica,

[10] Zonaras on this occaſion mentions Poſthumus; but the regiſters of the ſenate (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 203.) prove that Tetricus was already emperor of the weſtern provinces.

[11] The Auguſtan Hiſtory mentions the ſmaller, Zonaras the larger, number; the lively fancy of Monteſquieu induced him to prefer the latter.

the

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the wealthy capital of all the Macedonian provinces. Their attacks, in which they diſplayed a fierce but artleſs bravery, were ſoon interrupted by the rapid approach of Claudius, haſtening to a ſcene of action that deſerved the preſence of a warlike prince at the head of the remaining powers of the empire. Impatient for battle, the Goths immediately broke up their camp, relinquiſhed the ſiege of Theſſalonica, left their navy at the foot of mount Athos, traverſed the hills of Macedonia, and preſſed forwards to engage the laſt defence of Italy.

Diſtreſs and firmneſs of Claudius.

We ſtill poſſeſs an original letter addreſſed by Claudius to the ſenate and people on this memorable occaſion. "Conſcript fathers," ſays the emperor, "know that three hundred and twenty thouſand "Goths have invaded the Roman territory. If I vanquiſh them, "your gratitude will reward my ſervices. Should I fall, remember "that I am the ſucceſſor of Gallienus. The whole republic is fa"tigued and exhauſted. We ſhall fight after Valerian, after Ingenuus, "Regillianus, Lollianus, Poſthumus, Celſus, and a thouſand others, "whom a juſt contempt for Gallienus provoked into rebellion. We "are in want of darts, of ſpears, and of ſhields. The ſtrength of the "empire, Gaul, and Spain, are uſurped by Tetricus, and we bluſh "to acknowledge that the archers of the Eaſt ſerve under the ban"ners of Zenobia. Whatever we ſhall perform, will be ſufficiently "great[12]." The melancholy firmneſs of this epiſtle announces a hero careleſs of his fate, conſcious of his danger, but ſtill deriving a well-grounded hope from the reſources of his own mind.

His victory over the Goths.

The event ſurpaſſed his own expectations and thoſe of the world. By the moſt ſignal victories he delivered the empire from this hoſt of barbarians, and was diſtinguiſhed by poſterity under the glorious appellation of the Gothic Claudius. The imperfect hiſtorians of an irregular war[13] do not enable us to deſcribe the order and circum-

[12] Trebell. Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 204.

[13] Hiſt. Auguſt. in Claud. Aurelian. et Prob Zoſimus, l i. p 38—42. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638. Aurel. Victor in Epitom. Victor Junior in Cæſar. Eutrop. ix. 11. Euſeb. in Chron.

ſtances

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ſtances of his exploits; but, if we could be indulged in the alluſion, we might diſtribute into three acts this memorable tragedy. I. The deciſive battle was fought near Naiſſus, a city of Dardania. The legions at firſt gave way, oppreſſed by numbers, and diſmayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a ſeaſonable relief. A large detachment riſing out of the ſecret and difficult paſſes of the mountains, which, by his order, they had occupied, ſuddenly aſſailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favorable inſtant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, reſtored their ranks, and preſſed the barbarians on every ſide. Fifty thouſand men are reported to have been ſlain in the battle of Naiſſus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a moveable fortification of waggons, retired, or rather eſcaped, from the field of ſlaughter. II. We may preſume that ſome inſurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the diſobedience, of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the deſtruction of the Goths. The war was diffuſed over the provinces of Mæſia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, ſurpriſes, and tumultuary engagements, as well by ſea as by land. When the Romans ſuffered any loſs, it was commonly occaſioned by their own cowardice or raſhneſs; but the ſuperior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the country, and his judicious choice of meaſures as well as officers, aſſured on moſt occaſions the ſucceſs of his arms. The immenſe booty, the fruit of ſo many victories, conſiſted for the greater part of cattle and ſlaves. A ſelect body of the Gothic youth was received among the Imperial troops; the remainder was ſold into ſervitude; and ſo conſiderable was the number of female captives, that every ſoldier obtained to his ſhare two or three women. A circumſtance from which we may conclude, that the invaders entertained ſome deſigns of ſettlement as well as of plunder; ſince even in a naval expedition they were accompanied

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companied by their families. III. The loſs of their fleet, which was either taken or ſunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vaſt circle of Roman poſts diſtributed with ſkill, ſupported with firmneſs, and gradually cloſing towards a common centre, forced the barbarians into the moſt inacceſſible parts of mount Hæmus, where they found a ſafe refuge, but a very ſcanty ſubſiſtence. During the courſe of a rigorous winter, in which they were beſieged by the emperor's troops, famine and peſtilence, deſertion and the ſword, continually

A. D. 270. diminiſhed the impriſoned multitude. On the return of ſpring, nothing appeared in arms except a hardy and deſperate band, the remnant of that mighty hoſt which had embarked at the mouth of the Nieſter.

March. Death of the emperor, who recommends Aurelian for his ſucceſſor.

The peſtilence which ſwept away ſuch numbers of the barbarians, at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a ſhort but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium, amidſt the tears and acclamations of his ſubjects. In his laſt illneſs, he convened the principal officers of the ſtate and army, and in their preſence recommended Aurelian, one of his generals, as the moſt deſerving of the throne, and the beſt qualified to execute the great deſign which he himſelf had been permitted only to undertake. The virtues of Claudius, his valour, affability[14], juſtice, and temperance, his love of fame and of his country, place him in that ſhort liſt of emperors who added luſtre to the Roman purple. Thoſe virtues, however, were celebrated with peculiar zeal and complacency by the courtly writers of the age of Conſtantine, who was the great grandſon of Criſpus, the elder brother of Claudius. The voice of flattery was ſoon taught to repeat, that the gods, who ſo haſtily had ſnatched Claudius from the earth, rewarded his merit and piety by the perpetual eſtabliſhment of the empire in his family[15].

[14] According to Zonaras (l. xii. p. 638.), Claudius, before his death, inveſted him with the purple; but this ſingular fact is rather contradicted than confirmed by other writers.

[15] See the life of Claudius by Pollio, and the orations of Mamertinus, Eumenius, and Julian. See likewiſe the Cæſars of Julian, p. 313. In Julian it was not adulation, but ſuperſtition and vanity.

Notwith-

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The attempt and fall of Quintilius.

Notwithſtanding theſe oracles, the greatneſs of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleaſed them to aſſume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occaſioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who poſſeſſed not ſufficient moderation or courage to deſcend into the private ſtation to which the patriotiſm of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he aſſumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a conſiderable force; and though his reign laſted only ſeventeen days, he had time to obtain the ſanction of the ſenate, and to experience a mutiny of the troops. As ſoon as he was informed that the great army of the Danube had inveſted the well-known valour of Aurelian with Imperial power, he ſunk under the fame and merit of his rival; and ordering his veins to be opened, prudently withdrew himſelf from the unequal conteſt[16]. April.

Origin and ſervices of Aurelian.

The general deſign of this work will not permit us minutely to relate the actions of every emperor after he aſcended the throne, much leſs to deduce the various fortunes of his private life. We ſhall only obſerve, that the father of Aurelian was a peaſant of the territory of Sirmium, who occupied a ſmall farm, the property of Aurelius, a rich ſenator. His warlike ſon inliſted in the troops as a common ſoldier, ſucceſſively roſe to the rank of a centurion, a tribune, the præfect of a legion, the inſpector of the camp, the general, or, as it was then called, the duke, of a frontier; and at length, during the Gothic war, exerciſed the important office of commander in chief of the cavalry. In every ſtation he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by matchleſs valour[17], rigid diſcipline, and ſucceſsful conduct. He

[16] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 42. Pollio (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 207.) allows him virtues, and ſays, that like Pertinax he was killed by the licentious ſoldiers. According to Dexippus, he died of a diſeaſe.

[17] Theoclius (as quoted in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 211.) affirms, that in one day he killed, with his own hand, forty-eight Sarmatians, and in ſeveral ſubſequent engagements nine hundred and fifty. This heroic valour was admired by the ſoldiers, and celebrated in their rude ſongs, the burden of which was *mille, mille, mille occidit*.

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was inveſted with the conſulſhip by the emperor Valerian, who ſtyles him, in the pompous language of that age, the deliverer of Illyricum, the reſtorer of Gaul, and the rival of the Scipios. At the recommendation of Valerian, a ſenator of the higheſt rank and merit, Ulpius Crinitus, whoſe blood was derived from the ſame ſource as that of Trajan, adopted the Pannonian peaſant, gave him his daughter in marriage, and relieved with his ample fortune the honourable poverty which Aurelian had preſerved inviolate[18].

Aurelian's ſucceſsful reign.

The reign of Aurelian laſted only four years and about nine months; but every inſtant of that ſhort period was filled by ſome memorable atchievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chaſtiſed the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain out of the hands of Tetricus, and deſtroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the Eaſt, on the ruins of the afflicted empire.

His fevere diſcipline.

It was the rigid attention of Aurelian, even to the minuteſt articles of diſcipline, which beſtowed ſuch uninterrupted ſucceſs on his arms. His military regulations are contained in a very conciſe epiſtle to one of his inferior officers, who is commanded to enforce them, as he wiſhes to become a tribune, or as he is deſirous to live. Gaming, drinking, and the arts of divination, were ſeverely prohibited. Aurelian expected that his ſoldiers ſhould be modeſt, frugal, and laborious; that their armour ſhould be conſtantly kept bright, their weapons ſharp, their clothing and horſes ready for immediate ſervice; that they ſhould live in their quarters with chaſtity and ſobriety, without damaging the corn fields, without ſtealing even a ſheep, a fowl, or a bunch of grapes, without exacting from their landlords, either ſalt, or oil, or wood. "The public allow-
"ance," continues the emperor, "is ſufficient for their ſupport;

[18] Acholius (ap. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 213.) deſcribes the ceremony of the adoption, as it was performed at Byzantium, in the preſence of the emperor and his great officers.

"their

" their wealth ſhould be collected from the ſpoil of the enemy, not " from the tears of the provincials[19]." A ſingle inſtance will ſerve to diſplay the rigour, and even cruelty, of Aurelian. One of the ſoldiers had ſeduced the wife of his hoſt. The guilty wretch was faſtened to two trees forcibly drawn towards each other, and his limbs were torn aſunder by their ſudden ſeparation. A few ſuch examples impreſſed a ſalutary conſternation. The puniſhments of Aurelian were terrible; but he had ſeldom occaſion to puniſh more than once the ſame offence. His own conduct gave a ſanction to his laws, and the ſeditious legions dreaded a chief who had learned to obey, and who was worthy to command.

He concludes a treaty with the Goths,

The death of Claudius had revived the fainting ſpirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the paſſes of Mount Hæmus, and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehenſion of a civil war; and it ſeems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favourable opportunity, abandoned their ſettlements of the Ukraine, traverſed the rivers, and ſwelled with new multitudes the deſtroying hoſt of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night[20]. Exhauſted by ſo many calamities, which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years war, the Goths and the Romans conſented to a laſting and beneficial treaty. It was earneſtly ſolicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whoſe ſuffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the deciſion of that important queſtion. The Gothic nation engaged to ſupply the armies of Rome with a body of two thouſand auxiliaries, conſiſting entirely of cavalry, and ſtipulated in return an undiſturbed

[19] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 211. This laconic epiſtle is truly the work of a ſoldier; it abounds with military phraſes and words, ſome of which cannot be underſtood without difficulty. *Ferramenta ſamiata* is well explained by Salmaſius. The former of the words means all weapons of offence, and is contraſted with *Arma*, defenſive armour. The latter ſignifies keen and well ſharpened.

[20] Zoſim. l. i. p. 45.

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retreat, with a regular market as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor's care, but at their own expence. The treaty was obſerved with ſuch religious fidelity, that when a party of five hundred men ſtraggled from the camp in queſt of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader ſhould be apprehended and ſhot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the ſanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely, that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hoſtages the ſons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed ſomething to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exerciſe of arms, and near his own perſon: to the damſels he gave a liberal and Roman education, and by beſtowing them in marriage on ſome of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the cloſeſt and moſt endearing connexions[21].

and reſigns to them the province of Dacia.

But the moſt important condition of peace was underſtood rather than expreſſed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquiſhed that great province to the Goths and Vandals[22]. His manly judgment convinced him of the ſolid advantages, and taught him to deſpiſe the ſeeming diſgrace, of thus contracting the frontiers of the monarchy. The Dacian ſubjects, removed from thoſe diſtant poſſeſſions which they were unable to cultivate or defend, added ſtrength and populouſneſs to the ſouthern ſide of the Danube. A fertile territory, which the repetition of barbarous inroads had changed into a deſert, was yielded to their induſtry, and a new province of Dacia ſtill preſerved the memory of Trajan's conqueſts. The old country of that name detained, however, a conſiderable number of its inhabitants, who

[21] Dexippus (ap. Excerpta Legat. p. 12.) relates the whole tranſaction under the name of Vandals. Aurelian married one of the Gothic ladies to his general Bonoſus, who was able to drink with the Goths and diſcover their ſecrets. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 247.

[22] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Eutrop. ix. 15. Sextus Rufus, c. 9. Lactantius de mortibus Perſecutorum, c. 9.

dreaded

dreaded exile more than a Gothic maſter[23]. Theſe degenerate Romans continued to ſerve the empire, whoſe allegiance they had renounced by introducing among their conquerors the firſt notions of agriculture, the uſeful arts, and the conveniences of civiliſed life. An intercourſe of commerce and language was gradually eſtabliſhed between the oppoſite banks of the Danube; and after Dacia became an independent ſtate, it often proved the firmeſt barrier of the empire againſt the invaſions of the ſavages of the North. A ſenſe of intereſt attached theſe more ſettled barbarians to the alliance of Rome, and a permanent intereſt very frequently ripens into ſincere and uſeful friendſhip. This various colony, which filled the ancient province, and was inſenſibly blended into one great people, ſtill acknowledged the ſuperior renown and authority of the Gothic tribe, and claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin. At the ſame time the lucky though accidental reſemblance of the name of Gæta, infuſed among the credulous Goths a vain perſuaſion, that, in a remote age, their own anceſtors, already ſeated in the Dacian provinces, had received the inſtructions of Zamolxis, and checked the victorious arms of Seſoſtris and Darius[24].

The Alemannic war.

While the vigorous and moderate conduct of Aurelian reſtored the Illyrian frontier, the nation of the Alemanni[25] violated the conditions of peace, which either Gallienus had purchaſed, or Claudius had impoſed, and inflamed by their impatient youth, ſuddenly flew to arms. Forty thouſand horſe appeared in the

[23] The Walachians ſtill preſerve many traces of the Latin language, and have boaſted, in every age, of their Roman deſcent. They are ſurrounded by, but not mixed with, the barbarians. See a Memoir of M. d'Anville on ancient Dacia, in the Academy of Inſcriptions, tom. xxx.

[24] See the firſt chapter of Jornandes. The Vandals however (c. 22.) maintained a ſhort independence between the rivers Mariſia and Criſſia (Maros and Keres) which fell into the Teiſs.

[25] Dexippus, p. 7—12. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 43. Vopiſcus in Aurelian. in Hiſt. Auguſt. However theſe hiſtorians differ in names (Alemanni, Juthungi, and Marcomanni), it is evident that they mean the ſame people, and the ſame war; but it requires ſome care to conciliate and explain them.

field,

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field[26], and the numbers of the infantry doubled thoſe of the cavalry[27]. The firſt objects of their avarice were a few cities of the Rhætian frontier; but their hopes ſoon riſing with ſucceſs, the rapid march of the Alemanni traced a line of devaſtation from the Danube to the Po[28].

A. D. 270. September.

The emperor was almoſt at the ſame time informed of the irruption, and of the retreat, of the barbarians. Collecting an active body of troops, he marched with ſilence and celerity along the ſkirts of the Hercynian foreſt; and the Alemanni, laden with the ſpoils of Italy, arrived at the Danube, without ſuſpecting, that on the oppoſite bank, and in an advantageous poſt, a Roman army lay concealed and prepared to intercept their return. Aurelian indulged the fatal ſecurity of the barbarians, and permitted about half their forces to paſs the river without diſturbance and without precaution. Their ſituation and aſtoniſhment gave him an eaſy victory; his ſkilful conduct improved the advantage. Diſpoſing the legions in a ſemicircular form, he advanced the two horns of the creſcent acroſs the Danube, and wheeling them on a ſudden towards the centre, incloſed the rear of the German hoſt. The diſmayed barbarians, on whatſoever ſide they caſt their eyes, beheld with deſpair, a waſted country, a deep and rapid ſtream, a victorious and implacable enemy.

Reduced to this diſtreſſed condition, the Alemanni no longer diſdained to ſue for peace. Aurelian received their ambaſſadors at the head of his camp, and with every circumſtance of martial pomp that could diſplay the greatneſs and diſcipline of Rome. The legions ſtood to their arms in well-ordered ranks and awful ſilence. The principal commanders, diſtinguiſhed by the enſigns of their

[26] Cantoclarus, with his uſual accuracy, chuſes to tranſlate three hundred thouſand: his verſion is equally repugnant to ſenſe and to grammar.

[27] We may remark, as an inſtance of bad taſte, that Dexippus applies to the light infantry of the Alemanni the technical terms proper only to the Grecian Phalanx.

[28] In Dexippus, we at preſent read Rhodanus, M. de Valois very judiciouſly alters the word to Eridanus.

rank, appeared on horſeback on either ſide of the Imperial throne. Behind the throne, the conſecrated images of the emperor, and his predeceſſors[29], the golden eagles, and the various titles of the legions, engraved in letters of gold, were exalted in the air on lofty pikes covered with ſilver. When Aurelian aſſumed his ſeat, his manly grace and majeſtic figure[30] taught the barbarians to revere the perſon as well as the purple of their conqueror. The ambaſſadors fell proſtrate on the ground in ſilence. They were commanded to riſe, and permitted to ſpeak. By the aſſiſtance of interpreters they extenuated their perfidy, magnified their exploits, expatiated on the viciſſitudes of fortune and the advantages of peace, and, with an ill-timed confidence, demanded a large ſubſidy, as the price of the alliance which they offered to the Romans. The anſwer of the emperor was ſtern and imperious. He treated their offer with contempt, and their demand with indignation, reproached the barbarians, that they were as ignorant of the arts of war as of the laws of peace, and finally diſmiſſed them with the choice only of ſubmitting to his unconditioned mercy, or awaiting the utmoſt ſeverity of his reſentment[31]. Aurelian had reſigned a diſtant province to the Goths; but it was dangerous to truſt or to pardon theſe perfidious barbarians, whoſe formidable power kept Italy itſelf in perpetual alarms.

The Alemanni invade Italy,

Immediately after this conference, it ſhould ſeem that ſome unexpected emergency required the emperor's preſence in Pannonia. He devolved on his lieutenants the care of finiſhing the deſtruction of the Alemanni, either by the ſword, or by the ſurer operation of famine. But an active deſpair has often triumphed over the indolent aſſurance of ſucceſs. The barbarians, finding it impoſſible to

[29] The emperor Claudius was certainly of the number; but we are ignorant how far this mark of reſpect was extended; if to Cæſar and Auguſtus, it muſt have produced a very awful ſpectacle; a long line of the maſters of the world.

[30] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 210.

[31] Dexippus gives them a ſubtle and prolix oration, worthy of a Grecian Sophiſt.

traverſe

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traverſe the Danube and the Roman camp, broke through the poſts in their rear, which were more feebly or leſs carefully guarded; and with incredible diligence, but by a different road, returned towards the mountains of Italy[32]. Aurelian, who conſidered the war as totally extinguiſhed, received the mortifying intelligence of the eſcape of the Alemanni, and of the ravage which they already committed in the territory of Milan. The legions were commanded to follow, with as much expedition as thoſe heavy bodies were capable of exerting, the rapid flight of an enemy, whoſe infantry and cavalry moved with almoſt equal ſwiftneſs. A few days afterwards the emperor himſelf marched to the relief of Italy, at the head of a choſen body of auxiliaries (among whom were the hoſtages and cavalry of the Vandals), and of all the Prætorian guards who had ſerved in the wars on the Danube[33].

and are at laſt vanquiſhed by Aurelian.

As the light troops of the Alemanni had ſpread themſelves from the Alps to the Apennine, the inceſſant vigilance of Aurelian and his officers was exerciſed in the diſcovery, the attack, and the purſuit of the numerous detachments. Notwithſtanding this deſultory war, three conſiderable battles are mentioned, in which the principal force of both armies was obſtinately engaged[34]. The ſucceſs was various. In the firſt, fought near Placentia, the Romans received ſo ſevere a blow, that, according to the expreſſion of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate diſſolution of the empire was apprehended[35]. The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, ſuddenly attacked the legions in the duſk of the evening, and, it is moſt probable, after the fatigue and diſorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irreſiſtible; but at length, after a dreadful ſlaughter, the patient firmneſs of the emperor rallied his troops, and reſtored, in ſome degree, the honour of his arms.

[32] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 215.
[33] Dexippus, p. 12.
[34] Victor Junior, in Aurelian.
[35] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216.

The

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The ſecond battle was fought near Fano in Umbria; on the ſpot which, five hundred years before, had been fatal to the brother of Hannibal [36]. Thus far the ſucceſsful Germans had advanced along the Æmilian and Flaminian way, with a deſign of ſacking the defenceleſs miſtreſs of the world. But Aurelian, who, watchful for the ſafety of Rome, ſtill hung on their rear, found in this place the deciſive moment, of giving them a total and irretrievable defeat [37]. The flying remnant of their hoſt was exterminated in a third and laſt battle near Pavia; and Italy was delivered from the inroads of the Alemanni.

Superſtitious ceremonies.

Fear has been the original parent of ſuperſtition, and every new calamity urges trembling mortals to deprecate the wrath of their inviſible enemies. Though the beſt hope of the republic was in the valour and conduct of Aurelian, yet ſuch was the public conſternation, when the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome, that, by a decree of the ſenate, the Sibylline books were conſulted. Even the emperor himſelf, from a motive either of religion or of policy, recommended this ſalutary meaſure, chided the tardineſs of the ſenate [38], and offered to ſupply whatever expence, whatever animals, whatever captives of any nation, the gods ſhould require. Notwithſtanding this liberal offer, it does not appear, that any human victims expiated with their blood the ſins of the Roman people. The Sibylline books enjoined ceremonies of a more harmleſs nature, proceſſions of prieſts in white robes, attended by a chorus of youths and virgins; luſtrations of the city and adjacent country; and ſacrifices, whoſe powerful influence diſabled the barbarians from paſſing the myſtic ground on which they had been celebrated. However puerile in themſelves, theſe ſuperſtitious arts

A. D. 271. January 11.

[36] The little river or rather torrent of Metaurus near Fano, has been immortalized, by finding ſuch an hiſtorian as Livy, and ſuch a poet as Horace.

[37] It is recorded by an inſcription found at Pezaro. See Gruter. cclxxvi. 3.

[38] One ſhould imagine, he ſaid, that you were aſſembled in a Chriſtian church, not in the temple of all the gods.

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were ſubſervient to the ſucceſs of the war; and if, in the deciſive battle of Fano, the Alemanni fancied they ſaw an army of ſpectres combating on the ſide of Aurelian, he received a real and effectual aid from this imaginary reinforcement [39].

Fortifications of Rome.

But whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts, the experience of the paſt, and the dread of the future, induced the Romans to conſtruct fortifications of a groſſer and more ſubſtantial kind. The ſeven hills of Rome had been ſurrounded, by the ſucceſſors of Romulus, with an ancient wall of more than thirteen miles [40]. The vaſt incloſure may ſeem diſproportioned to the ſtrength and numbers of the infant ſtate. But it was neceſſary to ſecure an ample extent of paſture and arable land, againſt the frequent and ſudden incurſions of the tribes of Latium, the perpetual enemies of the republic. With the progreſs of Roman greatneſs, the city and its inhabitants gradually increaſed, filled up the vacant ſpace, pierced through the uſeleſs walls, covered the field of Mars, and, on every ſide, followed the public highways in long and beautiful ſuburbs [41]. The extent of the new walls, erected by Aurelian, and finiſhed in the reign of Probus, was magnified by popular eſtimation to near fifty [42], but is reduced by accurate meaſurement to about twenty-one, miles [43]. It was a great but a melancholy labour, ſince the defence of the capital betrayed the decline of the monarchy. The Romans of a more proſperous age, who truſted to

[39] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Aug. p. 215, 216. gives a long account of theſe ceremonies, from the Regiſters of the ſenate.

[40] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5. To confirm our idea, we may obſerve, that for a long time Mount Cælius was a grove of oaks, and Mount Viminal was over-run with oſiers; that, in the fourth century, the Aventine was a vacant and ſolitary retirement; that till the time of Auguſtus, the Eſquiline was an unwholeſome burying-ground; and that the numerous inequalities, remarked by the ancients in the Quirinal, ſufficiently prove that it was not covered with buildings. Of the ſeven hills, the Capitoline and Palatine only, with the adjacent vallies, were the primitive habitation of the Roman people. But this ſubject would require a diſſertation.

[41] Exſpatiantia tecta multas addidere urbes, is the expreſſion of Pliny.

[42] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Both Lipſius and Iſaac Voſſius have eagerly embraced this meaſure.

[43] See Nardini, Roma Antica, l. i. c. 8.

the

the arms of the legions the ſafety of the frontier camps [44], were very far from entertaining a ſuſpicion, that it would ever become neceſſary to fortify the ſeat of empire againſt the inroads of the barbarians [45].

Aurelian ſuppreſſes the two uſurpers.

The victory of Claudius over the Goths, and the ſucceſs of Aurelian againſt the Alemanni, had already reſtored to the arms of Rome their ancient ſuperiority over the barbarous nations of the North. To chaſtiſe domeſtic tyrants, and to reunite the diſmembered parts of the empire, was a taſk reſerved for the ſecond of thoſe warlike emperors. Though he was acknowledged by the ſenate and people, the frontiers of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace, confined the limits of his reign. Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Aſia Minor, were ſtill poſſeſſed by two rebels, who alone, out of ſo numerous a liſt, had hitherto eſcaped the dangers of their ſituation; and to complete the ignominy of Rome, theſe rival thrones had been uſurped by women.

Succeſſion of uſurpers in Gaul.

A rapid ſucceſſion of monarchs had ariſen and fallen in the provinces of Gaul. The rigid virtues of Poſthumus ſerved only to haſten his deſtruction. After ſuppreſſing a competitor, who had aſſumed the purple at Mentz, he refuſed to gratify his troops with the plunder of the rebellious city; and, in the ſeventh year of his reign, became the victim of their diſappointed avarice [46]. The death of Victorinus, his friend and aſſociate, was occaſioned by a leſs worthy cauſe. The ſhining accompliſhments [47] of that prince were ſtained by a licentious paſſion, which he indulged in acts of violence,

[44] Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 23.

[45] For Aurelian's walls, ſee Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216. 222. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 43. Eutropius, ix. 15. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian. Victor Junior in Aurelian. Euſeb. Hieronym. et Idatius in Chronic.

[46] His competitor was Lollianus, or Ælianus, if indeed theſe names mean the ſame perſon. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1177.

[47] The character of this prince by Julius Aterianus (ap. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 187.) is worth tranſcribing, as it ſeems fair and impartial. Victorino qui poſt Junium Poſthumium Gallias rexit neminem exiſtimo præferendum; non in virtute Trajanum; non Antoninum in clementia; non in gravitate Nervam; non in gubernando ærario Veſpaſianum; non in Cenſura totius vitæ ac ſeveritate militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido et cupiditas voluptatis mulierariæ ſic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes ejus in literas mittere quem conſtat omnium judicio meruiſſe puniri.

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with too little regard to the laws of ſociety, or even to thoſe of love[48]. He was ſlain at Cologne, by a conſpiracy of jealous huſbands, whoſe revenge would have appeared more juſtifiable, had they ſpared the innocence of his ſon. After the murder of ſo many valiant princes, it is ſomewhat remarkable, that a female for a long time controlled the fierce legions of Gaul, and ſtill more ſingular, that ſhe was the mother of the unfortunate Victorinus. The arts and treaſures of Victoria enabled her ſucceſſively to place Marius and Tetricus on the throne, and to reign with a manly vigour under the name of thoſe dependent emperors. Money of copper, of ſilver, and of gold, was coined in her name; ſhe aſſumed the titles of Auguſta and Mother of the Camps: her power ended only with her life; but her life was perhaps ſhortened by the ingratitude of Tetricus[49].

The reign and defeat of Tetricus.

When, at the inſtigation of his ambitious patroneſs, Tetricus aſſumed the enſigns of royalty, he was governor of the peaceful province of Aquitaine, an employment ſuited to his character and education. He reigned four or five years over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, the ſlave and ſovereign of a licentious army, whom he dreaded, and by whom he was deſpiſed. The valour and fortune of Aurelian at length opened the proſpect of a deliverance. He ventured to diſcloſe his melancholy ſituation, and conjured the emperor

A. D. 271. Summer.

to haſten to the relief of his unhappy rival. Had this ſecret correſpondence reached the ears of the ſoldiers, it would moſt probably have coſt Tetricus his life; nor could he reſign the ſceptre of the Weſt, without committing an act of treaſon againſt himſelf. He affected the appearances of a civil war, led his forces into the field againſt Aurelian, poſted them in the moſt diſadvantageous manner, betrayed his own counſels to the enemy, and with a few

[48] He raviſhed the wife of Attitianus, an *actuary*, or army agent. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 186. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian.

[49] Pollio aſſigns her an article among the thirty tyrants. Hiſt. Aug. p. 200.

choſen

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choſen friends deſerted in the beginning of the action. The rebel legions, though diſordered and diſmayed by the unexpected treachery of their chief, defended themſelves with deſperate valour, till they were cut in pieces almoſt to a man, in this bloody and memorable battle, which was fought near Chalons in Champagne[50]. The retreat of the irregular auxiliaries, Franks and Batavians[51], whom the conqueror ſoon compelled or perſuaded to repaſs the Rhine, reſtored the general tranquillity, and the power of Aurelian was acknowledged from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules.

As early as the reign of Claudius, the city of Autun, alone and unaſſiſted, had ventured to declare againſt the legions of Gaul. After a ſiege of ſeven months, they ſtormed and plundered that unfortunate city, already waſted by famine[52]. Lyons, on the contrary, had reſiſted with obſtinate diſaffection the arms of Aurelian. We read of the puniſhment of Lyons[53], but there is not any mention of the rewards of Autun. Such, indeed, is the policy of civil war: ſeverely to remember injuries, and to forget the moſt important ſervices. Revenge is profitable, gratitude is expenſive.

A. D. 272. Character of Zenobia;

Aurelian had no ſooner ſecured the perſon and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms againſt Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the Eaſt. Modern Europe has produced ſeveral illuſtrious women who have ſuſtained with glory the weight of empire; nor is our own age deſtitute of ſuch diſtinguiſhed characters.

[50] Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 220. The two Victors, in the lives of Gallienus and Aurelian. Eutropius, ix. 13. Euſeb. in Chron. Of all theſe writers, only the two laſt (but with ſtrong probability) place the fall of Tetricus before that of Zenobia. M. de Boze (in the Academy of Inſcriptions, tom. xxx.) does not wiſh, and Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 1109.) does not dare, to follow them. I have been fairer than the one, and bolder than the other.

[51] Victor Junior in Aurelian. Eumenius mentions *Bataviæ*; ſome critics, without any reaſon, would fain alter the word to *Bagaudicæ*.

[52] Eumen. in Vet. Panegyr. iv. 8.

[53] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 246. Autun was not reſtored till the reign of Diocletian. See Eumenius de reſtaurandis ſcholis.

But

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But if we except the doubtful atchievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female, whoſe ſuperior genius broke through the ſervile indolence impoſed on her ſex by the climate and manners of Aſia [54]. She claimed her deſcent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her anceſtor Cleopatra, and far ſurpaſſed that princeſs in chaſtity [55] and valour. Zenobia was eſteemed the moſt lovely as well as the moſt heroic of her ſex. She was of a dark complexion (for in ſpeaking of a lady, theſe trifles become important). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteneſs, and her large black eyes ſparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the moſt attractive ſweetneſs. Her voice was ſtrong and harmonious. Her manly underſtanding was ſtrengthened and adorned by ſtudy. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but poſſeſſed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own uſe an epitome of oriental hiſtory, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the ſublime Longinus.

her beauty and learning;

her valour.

This accompliſhed woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private ſtation raiſed himſelf to the dominion of the Eaſt. She ſoon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus paſſionately delighted in the exerciſe of hunting; he purſued with ardour the wild beaſts of the deſert, lions, panthers, and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amuſement was not inferior to his own. She had inured her conſtitution to fatigue, diſdained the uſe of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horſeback in a military habit, and ſometimes marched ſeveral miles on foot at the head of the troops. The ſucceſs of Odenathus was in a great meaſure aſcribed to her incom-

[54] Almoſt every thing that is ſaid of the manners of Odenathus and Zenobia, is taken from their lives in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, by Trebellius Pollio, ſee p. 192. 198.

[55] She never admitted her huſband's embraces but for the ſake of poſterity. If her hopes were baffled, in the enſuing *month* ſhe reiterated the experiment.

parable prudence and fortitude. Their ſplendid victories over the Great King, whom they twice purſued as far as the gates of Cteſiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had ſaved, acknowledged not any other ſovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The ſenate and people of Rome revered a ſtranger who had avenged their captive emperor, and even the inſenſible ſon of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague.

She revenges her huſband's death,

After a ſucceſsful expedition againſt the Gothic plunderers of Aſia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emeſa in Syria. Invincible in war, he was there cut off by domeſtic treaſon, and his favourite amuſement of hunting was the cauſe, or at leaſt the occaſion, of his death [56]. His nephew, Mæonius, preſumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and though admoniſhed of his error, repeated the ſame inſolence. As a monarch and as a ſportſman Odenathus was provoked, took away his horſe, a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chaſtiſed the raſh youth by a ſhort confinement. The offence was ſoon forgot, but the puniſhment was remembered; and Mæonius, with a few daring aſſociates, aſſaſſinated his uncle in the midſt of a great entertainment. Herod, the ſon of Odenathus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a ſoft and effeminate temper [57], was killed with his father. But Mæonius obtained only the pleaſure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had ſcarcely time to aſſume the title of Auguſtus, before he was ſacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her huſband [58]. A. D. 250.

and reigns over the Eaſt and Egypt.

With the aſſiſtance of his moſt faithful friends, ſhe immediately filled the vacant throne, and governed with manly counſels Palmyra,

[56] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 192, 193. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 36. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 633. The laſt is clear and probable, the others confuſed and inconſiſtent. The text of Syncellus, if not corrupt, is abſolute nonſenſe.

[57] Odenathus and Zenobia often ſent him, from the ſpoils of the enemy, preſents of gems and toys, which he received with infinite delight.

[58] Some very unjuſt ſuſpicions have been caſt on Zenobia, as if ſhe was acceſſary to her huſband's death.

Syria,

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Syria, and the Eaſt, above five years. By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the ſenate had granted him only as a perſonal diſtinction; but his martial widow, diſdaining both the ſenate and Gallienus, obliged one of the Roman generals, who was ſent againſt her, to retreat into Europe, with the loſs of his army and his reputation [59]. Inſtead of the little paſſions which ſo frequently perplex a female reign, the ſteady adminiſtration of Zenobia was guided by the moſt judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, ſhe could calm her reſentment: if it was neceſſary to puniſh, ſhe could impoſe ſilence on the voice of pity. Her ſtrict œconomy was accuſed of avarice; yet on every proper occaſion ſhe appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring ſtates of Arabia, Armenia, and Perſia, dreaded her enmity, and ſolicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenathus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his widow added the inheritance of her anceſtors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt. The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content, that, while *he* purſued the Gothic war, *ſhe* ſhould aſſert the dignity of the empire in the Eaſt [60]. The conduct, however, of Zenobia, was attended with ſome ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that ſhe had conceived the deſign of erecting an independent and hoſtile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the ſtately pomp of the courts of Aſia, and exacted from her ſubjects the ſame adoration that was paid to the ſucceſſors of Cyrus. She beſtowed on her three ſons [61] a Latin education, and often ſhewed them to the troops adorned with the Imperial purple. For herſelf ſhe reſerved the diadem, with the ſplendid but doubtful title of Queen of the Eaſt.

[59] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 180, 181.

[60] See in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 198. Aurelian's teſtimony to her merit; and for the conqueſt of Egypt, Zoſimus, l. i. p. 39, 40.

[61] Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus. It is ſuppoſed that the two former were already dead before the war. On the laſt, Aurelian beſtowed a ſmall province of Armenia with the title of King; ſeveral of his medals are ſtill extant. See Tillem. tom. iii. p. 1190.

When

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The expedition of Aurelian. A. D. 272.

When Aurelian paſſed over into Aſia, againſt an adverſary whoſe ſex alone could render her an object of contempt, his preſence reſtored obedience to the province of Bithynia, already ſhaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia[62]. Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the ſubmiſſion of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana after an obſtinate ſiege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the ſoldiers: a ſuperſtitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the countrymen of Apollonius the philoſopher[63]. Antioch was deſerted on his approach, till the emperor, by his ſalutary edicts, recalled the fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from neceſſity rather than choice, had been engaged in the ſervice of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildneſs of ſuch a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and, as far as the gates of Emeſa, the wiſhes of the people ſeconded the terror of his arms[64].

The emperor defeats the Palmyrenians in the battles of Antioch and Emeſa.

Zenobia would have ill deſerved her reputation, had ſhe indolently permitted the emperor of the Weſt to approach within an hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the Eaſt was decided in two great battles; ſo ſimilar in almoſt every circumſtance, that we can ſcarcely diſtinguiſh them from each other, except by obſerving that the firſt was fought near Antioch[65], and the ſecond near Emeſa[66]. In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her preſence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdas, who had already ſignalized his military talents by the conqueſt of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia conſiſted for the moſt

[62] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 44.

[63] Vopiſcus (in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 217.) gives us an authentic letter, and a doubtful viſion of Aurelian. Apollonius of Tyana was born about the ſame time as Jeſus Chriſt. His life (that of the former) is related in ſo fabulous a manner by his diſciples, that we are at a loſs to diſcover whether he was a ſage, an impoſtor, or a fanatic.

[64] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 46.

[65] At a place called Immæ. Eutropius, Sextus Rufus, and Jerome, mention only this firſt battle.

[66] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 217, mentions only the ſecond.

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part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete ſteel. The Mooriſh and Illyrian horſe of Aurelian were unable to ſuſtain the ponderous charge of their antagoniſts. They fled in real or affected diſorder, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious purſuit, haraſſed them by a deſultory combat, and at length diſcomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the mean time, when they had exhauſted their quivers, remaining without protection againſt a cloſer onſet, expoſed their naked ſides to the ſwords of the legions. Aurelian had choſen theſe veteran troops, who were uſually ſtationed on the Upper Danube, and whoſe valour had been ſeverely tried in the Alemannic war[67]. After the defeat of Emeſa, Zenobia found it impoſſible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations ſubject to her empire had joined the ſtandard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the braveſt of his generals, to poſſeſs himſelf of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the laſt reſource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous reſiſtance, and declared with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the laſt moment of her reign and of her life ſhould be the ſame.

The ſtate of Palmyra.

Amid the barren deſerts of Arabia, a few cultivated ſpots riſe like iſlands out of the ſandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or Palmyra, by its ſignification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm trees which afforded ſhade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the ſoil, watered by ſome invaluable ſprings, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place poſſeſſed of ſuch ſingular advantages, and ſituated at a convenient diſtance[68] between the gulph of Perſia and the

[67] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 44—48. His account of the two battles is clear and circumſtantial.

[68] It was five hundred and thirty-ſeven miles from Seleucia, and two hundred and three from the neareſt coaſt of Syria, according to the reckoning of Pliny, who, in a few words (Hiſt. Natur. v. 21.), gives an excellent deſcription of Palmyra.

Mediterranean,

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Mediterranean, was ſoon frequented by the caravans which conveyed to the nations of Europe a conſiderable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra inſenſibly increaſed into an opulent and independent city, and connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual benefits of commerce, was ſuffered to obſerve an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic ſunk into the boſom of Rome, and flouriſhed more than one hundred and fifty years in the ſubordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inſcriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians conſtructed thoſe temples, palaces, and porticos of Grecian architecture, whoſe ruins, ſcattered over an extent of ſeveral miles, have deſerved the curioſity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia appeared to reflect new ſplendour on their country, and Palmyra, for a while, ſtood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of proſperity were ſacrificed to a moment of glory[69].

It is beſieged by Aurelian,

In his march over the ſandy deſert between Emeſa and Palmyra, the emperor Aurelian was perpetually haraſſed by the Arabs; nor could he always defend his army, and eſpecially his baggage, from thoſe flying troops, of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of ſurpriſe, and eluded the ſlow purſuit of the legions. The ſiege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who, with inceſſant vigour, preſſed the attacks in perſon, was himſelf wounded with a dart. "The Roman people," ſays Aurelian, in an original letter, "ſpeak with contempt of the "war which I am waging againſt a woman. They are ignorant both

[69] Some Engliſh travellers from Aleppo *diſcovered* the ruins of Palmyra, about the end of the laſt century. Our curioſity has ſince been gratified in a more ſplendid manner by Meſſieurs Wood and Dawkins. For the hiſtory of Palmyra, we may conſult the maſterly diſſertation of Dr. Halley in the Philoſophical Tranſactions; Lowthorp's Abridgment, vol. iii. p. 518.

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" of the character and of the power of Zenobia. It is impoſſible to " enumerate her warlike preparations, of ſtones, of arrows, and of " every ſpecies of miſſile weapons. Every part of the walls is pro- " vided with two or three *baliſtæ*, and artificial fires are thrown " from her military engines. The fear of puniſhment has armed " her with a deſperate courage. Yet ſtill I truſt in the protecting " deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favourable to all my " undertakings[70]." Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the ſiege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation; to the queen, a ſplendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His propoſals were obſtinately rejected, and the refuſal was accompanied with inſult.

who becomes maſter of Zenobia and of the city.

The firmneſs of Zenobia was ſupported by the hope, that in a very ſhort time famine would compel the Roman army to repaſs the deſert; and by the reaſonable expectation that the kings of the Eaſt, and particularly the Perſian monarch, would arm in the defence of their moſt natural ally. But fortune and the perſeverance of Aurelian overcame every obſtacle. The death of Sapor, which happened about this time[71], diſtracted the councils of Perſia, and the inconſiderable ſuccours that attempted to relieve Palmyra, were eaſily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular ſucceſſion of convoys ſafely arrived in the camp, which was increaſed by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conqueſt of Egypt. It was then that Zenobia reſolved to fly. She mounted the fleeteſt of her dromedaries[72], and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates,

[70] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 218.

[71] From a very doubtful chronology I have endeavoured to extract the moſt probable date.

[72] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 218. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 50. Though the camel is a heavy beaſt of burden, the dromedary, who is either of the ſame or of a kindred ſpecies, is uſed by the natives of Aſia and Africa on all occaſions which require celerity. The Arabs affirm, that he will run over as much ground in one day, as their fleeteſt horſes can perform in eight or ten. See Buffon Hiſt. Naturelle, tom. xi. p. 222, and Shaw's Travels, p. 167.

about

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about ſixty miles from Palmyra, when ſhe was overtaken by the purſuit of Aurelian's light horſe, ſeized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital ſoon afterwards ſurrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horſes, and camels, with an immenſe treaſure of gold, ſilver, ſilk, and precious ſtones, were all delivered to the conqueror, who leaving only a garriſon of ſix hundred archers, returned to Emeſa, and employed ſome time in the diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments at the end of ſo memorable a war, which reſtored to the obedience of Rome thoſe provinces that had renounced their allegiance ſince the captivity of Valerian.

Behaviour of Zenobia.

When the Syrian queen was brought into the preſence of Aurelian, he ſternly aſked her, How ſhe had preſumed to riſe in arms againſt the emperors of Rome! The anſwer of Zenobia was a prudent mixture of reſpect and firmneſs. "Becauſe I diſdained to con-"ſider as Roman emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus. You alone "I acknowledge as my conqueror and my ſovereign[73]." But as female fortitude is commonly artificial, ſo it is ſeldom ſteady or conſiſtent. The courage of Zenobia deſerted her in the hour of trial; ſhe trembled at the angry clamours of the ſoldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution, forgot the generous deſpair of Cleopatra, which ſhe had propoſed as her model, and ignominiouſly purchaſed life by the ſacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counſels which governed the weakneſs of her ſex, that ſhe imputed the guilt of her obſtinate reſiſtance; it was on their heads that ſhe directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will ſurvive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered ſoldier, but they had ſerved to elevate and harmoniſe the ſoul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly

[73] Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 199.

followed

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followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy miſtreſs, and beſtowing comfort on his afflicted friends[74].

Rebellion and ruin of Palmyra.

Returning from the conqueſt of the Eaſt, Aurelian had already croſſed the Streights which divide Europe from Aſia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the Palmyrenians had maſſacred the governor and garriſon which he had left among them, and again erected the ſtandard of revolt. Without a moment's deliberation, he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach, and the helpleſs city of Palmyra felt the irreſiſtible weight of his reſentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himſelf, in which he acknowledges[75], that old men, women, children, and peaſants, had been involved in that dreadful execution, which ſhould have been confined to armed rebellion; and although his principal concern ſeems directed to the re-eſtabliſhment of a temple of the Sun, he diſcovers ſome pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permiſſion of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is eaſier to deſtroy than to reſtore. The ſeat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually ſunk into an obſcure town, a trifling fortreſs, and at length a miſerable village. The preſent citizens of Palmyra, conſiſting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the ſpacious court of a magnificent temple.

Aurelian ſuppreſſes the rebellion of Firmus in Egypt.

Another and a laſt labour ſtill awaited the indefatigable Aurelian; to ſuppreſs a dangerous though obſcure rebel, who, during the revolt of Palmyra, had ariſen on the banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly ſtyled himſelf, of Odenathus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy merchant of Egypt. In the courſe of his trade to India, he had formed very intimate connexions with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whoſe ſituation on either coaſt of the Red Sea gave them an eaſy introduction into the Upper

[74] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 219. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 51.

[75] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 219.

Egypt. The Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom, and, at the head of their furious multitude, broke into the city of Alexandria, where he aſſumed the Imperial purple, coined money, publiſhed edicts, and raiſed an army, which, as he vainly boaſted, he was capable of maintaining from the ſole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence againſt the approach of Aurelian; and it ſeems almoſt unneceſſary to relate, that Firmus was routed, taken, tortured, and put to death. Aurelian might now congratulate the ſenate, the people, and himſelf, that in little more than three years, he had reſtored univerſal peace and order to the Roman world[76].

A. D. 274. Triumph of Aurelian.

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deſerved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with ſuperior pride and magnificence[77]. The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the moſt curious animals from every climate of the North, the Eaſt, and the South. They were followed by ſixteen hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amuſement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Aſia, the arms and enſigns of ſo many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were diſpoſed in exact ſymmetry or artful diſorder. The ambaſſadors of the moſt remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Perſia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or ſingular dreſſes, diſplayed the fame and power of the Roman emperor, who expoſed likewiſe to the public view the preſents that he had received, and particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were atteſted by the long train of cap-

[76] See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 220. 242. As an inſtance of luxury, it is obſerved, that he had glaſs windows. He was remarkable for his ſtrength and appetite, his courage and dexterity. From the letter of Aurelian, we may juſtly infer, that Firmus was the laſt of the rebels, and conſequently that Tetricus was already ſuppreſſed.

[77] See the triumph of Aurelian, deſcribed by Vopiſcus. He relates the particulars with his uſual minuteneſs; and, on this occaſion, they *happen* to be intereſting. Hiſt. Aug. 220.

tives

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tives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians, and Egyptians. Each people was diſtinguiſhed by its peculiar inſcription, and the title of Amazons was beſtowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation who had been taken in arms[78]. But every eye, diſregarding the crowd of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus, and the queen of the Eaſt. The former, as well as his ſon, whom he had created Auguſtus, was dreſſed in Gallic trowſers[79], a ſaffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beauteous figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a ſlave ſupported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and ſhe almoſt fainted under the intolerable weight of jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot, in which ſhe once hoped to enter the gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, ſtill more ſumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Perſian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had formerly been uſed by a Gothic king) was drawn, on this memorable occaſion, either by four ſtags or by four elephants[80]. The moſt illuſtrious of the ſenate, the people, and the army, cloſed the ſolemn proceſſion. Unfeigned joy, wonder, and gratitude, ſwelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the ſatisfaction of the ſenate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they ſuppreſs a riſing murmur, that the haughty emperor ſhould thus expoſe to public ignominy the perſon of a Roman and a magiſtrate[81].

[78] Among barbarous nations, women have often combated by the ſide of their huſbands. But it is *álmoſt* impoſſible, that a ſociety of Amazons ſhould ever have exiſted either in the old or new world.

[79] The uſe of *Braccæ*, breeches, or trowſers, was ſtill conſidered in Italy as a Gallic and Barbarian faſhion. The Romans, however, had made great advances towards it. To encircle the legs and thighs with *faſciæ*, or bands, was underſtood, in the time of Pompey and Horace, to be a proof of ill-health or effeminacy. In the age of Trajan, the cuſtom was confined to the rich and luxurious. It gradually was adopted by the meaneſt of the people. See a very curious note of Caſaubon, ad Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 82.

[80] Moſt probably the former; the latter, ſeen on the medals of Aurelian, only denote (according to the learned Cardinal Noris) an oriental victory.

[81] The expreſſion of Calphurnius (Eclog. i. 50.), Nullos ducet *captiva* triumphos, as applied to Rome, contains a very manifeſt alluſion and cenſure.

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His treatment of Tetricus and Zenobia.

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, he behaved towards them with a generous clemency, which was ſeldom exerciſed by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without ſucceſs, had defended their throne or freedom, were frequently ſtrangled in priſon, as ſoon as the triumphal pomp aſcended the Capitol. Theſe uſurpers, whom their defeat had convicted of the crime of treaſon, were permitted to ſpend their lives in affluence and honourable repoſe. The emperor preſented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur, or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen inſenſibly ſunk into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century[82]. Tetricus and his ſon were reinſtated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian hill a magnificent palace, and as ſoon as it was finiſhed, invited Aurelian to ſupper. On his entrance, he was agreeably ſurpriſed with a picture which repreſented their ſingular hiſtory. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown and the ſceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the ſenatorial dignity. The father was afterwards inveſted with the government of Lucania[83], and Aurelian, who ſoon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendſhip and converſation, familiarly aſked him, Whether it were not more deſirable to adminiſter a province of Italy, than to reign beyond the Alps? The ſon long continued a reſpectable member of the ſenate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more eſteemed by Aurelian, as well as by his ſucceſſors[84].

His magnificence and devotion.

So long and ſo various was the pomp of Aurelian's triumph, that although it opened with the dawn of day, the ſlow majeſty of the

[82] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 199. Hieronym. in Chron. Proſper in Chron. Baronius ſuppoſes that Zenobius, biſhop of Florence in the time of St. Ambroſe, was of her family.

[83] Vopiſc. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Eutropius, ix. 13. Victor Junior. But Pollio in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196, ſays, that Tetricus was made corrector of all Italy.

[84] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 197.

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proceſſion aſcended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark when the emperor returned to the palace. The feſtival was protracted by theatrical repreſentations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beaſts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were diſtributed to the army and people, and ſeveral inſtitutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A conſiderable portion of his oriental ſpoils was conſecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other temple, glittered with the offerings of his oſtentatious piety; and the temple of the Sun alone received above fifteen thouſand pounds of gold [85]. This laſt was a magnificent ſtructure, erected by the emperor on the ſide of the Quirinal hill, and dedicated, ſoon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior prieſteſs in a chapel of the Sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of Light, was a ſentiment which the fortunate peaſant imbibed in his infancy; and every ſtep of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified ſuperſtition by gratitude [86].

He ſuppreſſes a ſedition at Rome.

The arms of Aurelian had vanquiſhed the foreign and domeſtic foes of the Republic. We are aſſured, that, by his ſalutary rigour, crimes and factions, miſchievous arts and pernicious connivance, the luxuriant growth of a feeble and oppreſſive government, were eradicated throughout the Roman world [87]. But if we attentively reflect how much ſwifter is the progreſs of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that the years abandoned to public diſorders

[85] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. 222. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 56. He placed in it the images of Belus and of the Sun, which he had brought from Palmyra. It was dedicated in the fourth year of his reign (Euſeb. in Chron.), but was moſt aſſuredly begun immediately on his acceſſion.

[86] See in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 210, the omens of his fortune. His devotion to the Sun appears in his letters, on his medals, and is mentioned in the Cæſars of Julian. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 109.

[87] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 221.

exceeded the months allotted to the martial reign of Aurelian, we muſt confeſs that a few ſhort intervals of peace were inſufficient for the arduous work of reformation. Even his attempt to reſtore the integrity of the coin, was oppoſed by a formidable inſurrection. The emperor's vexation breaks out in one of his private letters. "Surely," ſays he, "the gods have decreed that my life ſhould be "a perpetual warfare. A ſedition within the walls has juſt now "given birth to a very ſerious civil war. The workmen of the mint, "at the inſtigation of Feliciſſimus, a ſlave to whom I had intruſted "an employment in the finances, have riſen in rebellion. They "are at length ſuppreſſed; but ſeven thouſand of my ſoldiers have "been ſlain in the conteſt, of thoſe troops whoſe ordinary ſtation is "in Dacia, and the camps along the Danube[88]." Other writers, who confirm the ſame fact, add likewiſe, that it happened ſoon after Aurelian's triumph; that the deciſive engagement was fought on the Cælian hill; that the workmen of the mint had adulterated the coin; and that the emperor reſtored the public credit, by delivering out good money in exchange for the bad, which the people was commanded to bring into the treaſury[89].

Obſervations upon it.

We might content ourſelves with relating this extraordinary tranſaction, but we cannot diſſemble how much in its preſent form it appears to us inconſiſtent and incredible. The debaſement of the coin is indeed well ſuited to the adminiſtration of Gallienus; nor is it unlikely that the inſtruments of the corruption might dread the inflexible juſtice of Aurelian. But the guilt, as well as the profit, muſt have been confined to a few; nor is it eaſy to conceive by what arts they could arm a people whom they had injured, againſt a monarch whom they had betrayed. We might naturally expect, that ſuch miſcreants ſhould have ſhared the public deteſtation, with the

[88] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurelian calls thoſe ſoldiers *Hiberi Riparienſes*, *Caſtriani*, and *Daciſci*.

[89] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 56. Eutropius, ix. 14. Aurel. Victor.

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informers and the other miniſters of oppreſſion; and that the reformation of the coin ſhould have been an action equally popular with the deſtruction of thoſe obſolete accounts, which by the emperor's order were burnt in the forum of Trajan [90]. In an age when the principles of commerce were ſo imperfectly underſtood, the moſt deſirable end might perhaps be effected by harſh and injudicious means; but a temporary grievance of ſuch a nature can ſcarcely excite and ſupport a ſerious civil war. The repetition of intolerable taxes, impoſed either on the land or on the neceſſaries of life, may at laſt provoke thoſe who will not, or who cannot, relinquiſh their country. But the caſe is far otherwiſe in every operation which, by whatſoever expedients, reſtores the juſt value of money. The tranſient evil is ſoon obliterated by the permanent benefit, the loſs is divided among multitudes; and if a few wealthy individuals experience a ſenſible diminution of treaſure, with their riches, they at the ſame time loſe the degree of weight and importance which they derived from the poſſeſſion of them. However Aurelian might chuſe to diſguiſe the real cauſe of the inſurrection, his reformation of the coin could furniſh only a faint pretence to a party already powerful and diſcontented. Rome, though deprived of freedom, was diſtracted by faction. The people, towards whom the emperor, himſelf a plebeian, always expreſſed a peculiar fondneſs, lived in perpetual diſſention with the ſenate, the equeſtrian order, and the Prætorian guards [91]. Nothing leſs than the firm though ſecret conſpiracy of thoſe orders, of the authority of the firſt, the wealth of the ſecond, and the arms of the third, could have diſplayed a ſtrength capable of contending in battle with the veteran legions of the Danube, which, under the conduct of a martial ſovereign, had atchieved the conqueſt of the Weſt and of the Eaſt.

[90] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurel. Victor.

[91] It already raged before Aurelian's return from Egypt. See Vopiſcus, who quotes an original letter. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 244.

Whatever

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Cruelty of Aurelian.

Whatever was the cauſe or the object of this rebellion, imputed with ſo little probability to the workmen of the mint, Aurelian uſed his victory with unrelenting rigour[92]. He was naturallly of a ſevere diſpoſition. A peaſant and a ſoldier, his nerves yielded not eaſily to the impreſſions of ſympathy, and he could ſuſtain without emotion the ſight of tortures and death. Trained from his earlieſt youth in the exerciſe of arms, he ſet too ſmall a value on the life of a citizen, chaſtiſed by military execution the ſlighteſt offences, and transferred the ſtern diſcipline of the camp into the civil adminiſtration of the laws. His love of juſtice often became a blind and furious paſſion; and whenever he deemed his own or the public ſafety endangered, he diſregarded the rules of evidence, and the proportion of puniſhments. The unprovoked rebellion with which the Romans rewarded his ſervices, exaſperated his haughty ſpirit. The nobleſt families of the capital were involved in the guilt or ſuſpicion of this dark conſpiracy. A haſty ſpirit of revenge urged the bloody proſecution, and it proved fatal to one of the nephews of the emperor. The executioners (if we may uſe the expreſſion of a contemporary poet) were fatigued, the priſons were crowded, and the unhappy ſenate lamented the death or abſence of its moſt illuſtrious members[93]. Nor was the pride of Aurelian leſs offenſive to that aſſembly than his cruelty. Ignorant or impatient of the reſtraints of civil inſtitutions, he diſdained to hold his power by any other title than that of the ſword, and governed by right of conqueſt an empire which he had ſaved and ſubdued[94].

He marches into the Eaſt, and is aſſaſſinated.

It was obſerved by one of the moſt ſagacious of the Roman princes, that the talents of his predeceſſor Aurelian, were better

[92] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. The two Victors. Eutropius, ix. 14. Zoſimus (l. i. p. 43.) mentions only three ſenators, and places their death before the eaſtern war.

[93] Nulla catenati feralis pompa ſenatûs
Carnificum laſſabit opus; nec carcere pleno
Infelix raros numerabit curia Patres.
Calphurn. Eclog. i. 60.

[94] According to the younger Victor, he ſometimes wore the diadem. *Deus* and *Dominus* appear on his medals.

ſuited

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ſuited to the command of an army, than to the government of an empire[95]. Conſcious of the character in which Nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exerciſe the reſtleſs temper of the legions in ſome foreign war, and the Perſian monarch, exulting in the ſhame of Valerian, ſtill braved with impunity the offended majeſty of Rome. At the head of an army, leſs formidable by its numbers than by its diſcipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the Streights which divide Europe from Aſia. He there experienced, that the moſt abſolute power is a weak defence againſt the effects of deſpair. He had threatened one of his ſecretaries who was accuſed of extortion; and it was known that he ſeldom threatened in vain. The laſt hope which remained for the criminal, was to involve ſome of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at leaſt in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his maſter's hand, he ſhewed them, in a long and bloody liſt, their own names devoted to death. Without ſuſpecting or examining the fraud, they reſolved to ſecure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was ſuddenly attacked by the conſpirators, whoſe ſtations gave them a right to ſurround his perſon, and, after a ſhort reſiſtance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and truſted. He died regretted by the army, deteſted by the ſenate, but univerſally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the uſeful though ſevere reformer of a degenerate ſtate[96].

A. D. 274. October.

A. D. 275. January.

[95] It was the obſervation of Diocletian. See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 224.

[96] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 221. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 57. Eutrop. ix. 15. The two Victors.

CHAP. XII.

Conduct of the Army and Senate after the Death of Aurelian.—Reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and his Sons.

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Extraordinary conteſt between the army and the ſenate for the choice of an emperor.

SUCH was the unhappy condition of the Roman emperors, that, whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the ſame. A life of pleaſure or virtue, of ſeverity or mildneſs, of indolence or glory, alike led to an untimely grave; and almoſt every reign is cloſed by the ſame diſguſting repetition of treaſon and murder. The death of Aurelian, however, is remarkable by its extraordinary conſequences. The legions admired, lamented, and revenged, their victorious chief. The artifice of his perfidious ſecretary was diſcovered and puniſhed. The deluded conſpirators attended the funeral of their injured ſovereign, with ſincere or well-feigned contrition, and ſubmitted to the unanimous reſolution of the military order, which was ſignified by the following epiſtle. "The brave and fortunate armies to the ſenate and "people of Rome. The crime of one man, and the error of many, "have deprived us of the late emperor Aurelian. May it pleaſe you, "venerable lords and fathers! to place him in the number of the "gods, and to appoint a ſucceſſor whom your judgment ſhall declare "worthy of the Imperial purple! None of thoſe, whoſe guilt or "misfortune have contributed to our loſs, ſhall ever reign over "us[1]." The Roman ſenators heard, without ſurpriſe, that another emperor had been aſſaſſinated in his camp: they ſecretly rejoiced in the fall of Aurelian; but the modeſt and dutiful addreſs of the

[1] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 222. Aurelius Victor mentions a formal deputation from the troops to the ſenate.

legions,

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legions, when it was communicated in full aſſembly by the conſul, diffuſed the moſt pleaſing aſtoniſhment. Such honours as fear and perhaps eſteem could extort, they liberally poured forth on the memory of their deceaſed ſovereign. Such acknowledgments as gratitude could inſpire, they returned to the faithful armies of the republic, who entertained ſo juſt a ſenſe of the legal authority of the ſenate in the choice of an emperor. Yet, notwithſtanding this flattering appeal, the moſt prudent of the aſſembly declined expoſing their ſafety and dignity to the caprice of an armed multitude. The ſtrength of the legions was, indeed, a pledge of their ſincerity, ſince thoſe who may command are ſeldom reduced to the neceſſity of diſſembling; but could it naturally be expected, that a haſty repentance would correct the inveterate habits of fourſcore years? Should the ſoldiers relapſe into their accuſtomed ſeditions, their inſolence might diſgrace the majeſty of the ſenate, and prove fatal to the object of its choice. Motives like theſe dictated a decree, by which the election of a new emperor was referred to the ſuffrage of the military order.

A. D. 275. February 3. A peaceful interregnum of eight months.

The contention that enſued is one of the beſt atteſted, but moſt improbable events in the hiſtory of mankind[2]. The troops, as if ſatiated with the exerciſe of power, again conjured the ſenate to inveſt one of its own body with the Imperial purple. The ſenate ſtill perſiſted in its refuſal; the army in its requeſt. The reciprocal offer was preſſed and rejected at leaſt three times, and whilſt the obſtinate modeſty of either party was reſolved to receive a maſter from the hands of the other, eight months inſenſibly elapſed: an amazing period of tranquil anarchy, during which the Roman

[2] Vopiſcus, our principal authority, wrote at Rome, ſixteen years only after the death of Aurelian; and, beſides the recent notoriety of the facts, conſtantly draws his materials from the Journals of the Senate, and the original papers of the Ulpian library. Zoſimus and Zonaras appear as ignorant of this tranſaction as they were in general of the Roman conſtitution.

world remained without a ſovereign, without an uſurper, and without a ſedition. The generals and magiſtrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary functions; and it is obſerved, that a proconſul of Aſia was the only conſiderable perſon removed from his office, in the whole courſe of the interregnum.

An event ſomewhat ſimilar, but much leſs authentic, is ſuppoſed to have happened after the death of Romulus, who, in his life and character, bore ſome affinity with Aurelian. The throne was vacant during twelve months, till the election of a Sabine philoſopher, and the public peace was guarded in the ſame manner, by the union of the ſeveral orders of the ſtate. But, in the time of Numa and Romulus, the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the Patricians; and the balance of freedom was eaſily preſerved in a ſmall and virtuous community [3]. The decline of the Roman ſtate, far different from its infancy, was attended with every circumſtance that could baniſh from an interregnum the proſpect of obedience and harmony: an immenſe and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the ſervile equality of deſpotiſm, an army of four hundred thouſand mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolutions. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe temptations, the diſcipline and memory of Aurelian ſtill reſtrained the ſeditious temper of the troops, as well as the fatal ambition of their leaders. The flower of the legions maintained their ſtations on the banks of the Boſphorus, and the Imperial ſtandard awed the leſs powerful camps of Rome and of the provinces. A generous though tranſient enthuſiaſm ſeemed to animate the military order; and we may hope that a few real patriots cultivated the returning friendſhip of the army and the ſenate, as the only expedient capable of reſtoring the republic to its ancient beauty and vigour.

[3] Liv. i. 17. Dionyſ. Halicarn. l. ii. p. 115. Plutarch in Numa, p. 60. The firſt of theſe wtiters relates the ſtory like an orator, the ſecond like a lawyer, and the third like a moraliſt, and none of them probably without ſome intermixture of fable.

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A. D. 275. Sept. 25. The conſul aſſembles the ſenate.

On the twenty-fifth of September, near eight months after the murder of Aurelian, the conſul convoked an aſſembly of the ſenate, and reported the doubtful and dangerous ſituation of the empire. He ſlightly inſinuated, that the precarious loyalty of the ſoldiers depended on the chance of every hour, and of every accident; but he repreſented, with the moſt convincing eloquence, the various dangers that might attend any farther delay in the choice of an emperor. Intelligence, he ſaid, was already received, that the Germans had paſſed the Rhine, and occupied ſome of the ſtrongeſt and moſt opulent cities of Gaul. The ambition of the Perſian king kept the Eaſt in perpetual alarms; Egypt, Africa, and Illyricum, were expoſed to foreign and domeſtic arms, and the levity of Syria would prefer even a female ſceptre to the ſanctity of the Roman laws. The conſul then addreſſing himſelf to Tacitus, the firſt of the ſenators[4], required his opinion on the important ſubject of a proper candidate for the vacant throne.

Character of Tacitus.

If we can prefer perſonal merit to accidental greatneſs, we ſhall eſteem the birth of Tacitus more truly noble than that of kings. He claimed his deſcent from the philoſophic hiſtorian, whoſe writings will inſtruct the laſt generations of mankind[5]. The ſenator Tacitus was then ſeventy-five years of age[6]. The long period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been inveſted with the conſular dignity[7], and enjoyed with elegance and ſobriety his ample patrimony of between two and three

[4] Vopiſcus (in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 227.) calls him 'primæ ſententiæ conſularis;' and ſoon afterwards *Princeps ſenatûs*. It is natural to ſuppoſe, that the monarchs of Rome, diſdaining that humble title, reſigned it to the moſt ancient of the ſenators.

[5] The only objection to this genealogy, is, that the hiſtorian was named Cornelius, the emperor, Claudius. But under the lower empire, ſurnames were extremely various and uncertain.

[6] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. The Alexandrian Chronicle, by an obvious miſtake, tranſfers that age to Aurelian.

[7] In the year 273, he was ordinary conſul. But he muſt have been Suffectus many years before, and moſt probably under Valerian.

millions

millions ſterling [8]. The experience of ſo many princes, whom he had eſteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the uſeful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a juſt eſtimate of the duties, the dangers, and the temptations, of their ſublime ſtation. From the aſſiduous ſtudy of his immortal anceſtor he derived the knowledge of the Roman conſtitution, and of human nature [9]. The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the moſt worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to ſeek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had paſſed two months in the delightful privacy of Baiæ, when he reluctantly obeyed the ſummons of the conſul to reſume his honourable place in the ſenate, and to aſſiſt the republic with his counſels on this important occaſion.

He is elected emperor.

He aroſe to ſpeak, when, from every quarter of the houſe, he was ſaluted with the names of Auguſtus and Emperor. "Tacitus Au-"guſtus, the gods preſerve thee, we chuſe thee for our ſovereign, "to thy care we intruſt the republic and the world. Accept the "empire from the authority of the ſenate. It is due to thy rank, "to thy conduct, to thy manners." As ſoon as the tumult of acclamations ſubſided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to expreſs his wonder, that they ſhould elect his age and infirmities to ſucceed the martial vigour of Aurelian. "Are "theſe limbs, conſcript fathers! fitted to ſuſtain the weight of ar-"mour, or to practiſe the exerciſes of the camp? The variety of "climates, and the hardſhips of a military life, would ſoon op-"preſs a feeble conſtitution, which ſubſiſts only by the moſt tender

[8] *Bis millies octingenties.* Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 229. This ſum, according to the old ſtandard, was equivalent to eight hundred and forty thouſand Roman pounds of ſilver, each of the value of three pounds ſterling. But in the age of Tacitus, the coin had loſt much of its weight and purity.

[9] After his acceſſion, he gave orders that ten copies of the hiſtorian ſhould be annually tranſcribed and placed in the public libraries. The Roman libraries have long ſince periſhed, and the moſt valuable part of Tacitus was preſerved in a ſingle MS. and diſcovered in a monaſtery of Weſtphalia. See Bayle, Dictionnaire, Art. *Tacite*, and Lipſius ad Annal. ii. 9.

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" management. My exhauſted ſtrength ſcarcely enables me to " diſcharge the duty of a ſenator; how inſufficient would it prove " to the arduous labours of war and government. Can you hope, " that the legions will reſpect a weak old man, whoſe days have " been ſpent in the ſhade of peace and retirement? Can you deſire " that I ſhould ever find reaſon to regret the favourable opinion of " the ſenate [10]?"

and accepts the purple.

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might poſſibly be ſincere, was encountered by the affectionate obſtinacy of the ſenate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confuſion, that the greateſt of the Roman princes, Numa, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, had aſcended the throne in a very advanced ſeaſon of life; that the mind, not the body, a ſovereign, not a ſoldier, was the object of their choice; and that they expected from him no more than to guide by his wiſdom the valour of the legions. Theſe preſſing though tumultuary inſtances were ſeconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the conſular bench to Tacitus himſelf. He reminded the aſſembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headſtrong and capricious youths, congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced ſenator, and, with a manly, though perhaps a ſelfiſh, freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reaſons of his elevation, and to ſeek a ſucceſſor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The ſpeech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor elect ſubmitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the ſenate was confirmed by the conſent of the Roman people, and of the Prætorian guards [11].

Authority of the ſenate.

The adminiſtration of Tacitus was not unworthy of his life and principles. A grateful ſervant of the ſenate, he conſidered that national

[10] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 227.

[11] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 228. Tacitus addreſſed the Prætorians by the appellation of *ſanctiſſimi milites*, and the people by that of *ſacratiſſimi Quirites*.

tional council as the author, and himſelf as the ſubject, of the laws [12]. He ſtudied to heal the wounds which imperial pride, civil diſcord, and military violence, had inflicted on the conſtitution, and to reſtore, at leaſt, the image of the ancient republic, as it had been preſerved by the policy of Auguſtus, and the virtues of Trajan and the Antonines. It may not be uſeleſs to recapitulate ſome of the moſt important prerogatives which the ſenate appeared to have regained by the election of Tacitus [13]. 1. To inveſt one of their body, under the title of emperor, with the general command of the armies and the government of the frontier provinces. 2. To determine the liſt, or as it was then ſtyled, the College of Conſuls. They were twelve in number, who, in ſucceſſive pairs, each, during the ſpace of two months, filled the year, and repreſented the dignity of that ancient office. The authority of the ſenate, in the nomination of the conſuls, was exerciſed with ſuch independent freedom, that no regard was paid to an irregular requeſt of the emperor in favour of his brother Florianus. "The ſenate," exclaimed Tacitus, with the honeſt tranſport of a patriot, "underſtand the character of a prince "whom they have choſen." 3. To appoint the proconſuls and preſidents of the provinces, and to confer on all the magiſtrates their civil juriſdiction. 4. To receive appeals through the intermediate office of the præfect of the city from all the tribunals of the empire. 5. To give force and validity, by their decrees, to ſuch as they ſhould approve of the emperor's edicts. 6. To theſe ſeveral branches of authority, we may add ſome inſpection over the finances, ſince, even in the ſtern reign of Aurelian, it was in their power to divert a part of the revenue from the public ſervice [14].

[12] In his manumiſſions he never exceeded the number of an hundred, as limited by the Caninian law, which was enacted under Auguſtus, and at length repealed by Juſtinian. See Caſaubon ad locum Vopiſci.

[13] See the lives of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory; we may be well aſſured, that whatever the ſoldier gave, the ſenator had already given.

[14] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 216. The paſſage is perfectly clear; yet both Caſaubon and Salmaſius wiſh to correct it.

Circular

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Their joy and confidence.

Circular epiſtles were ſent, without delay, to all the principal cities of the empire, Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Theſſalonica, Corinth, Athens, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, to claim their obedience, and to inform them of the happy revolution, which had reſtored the Roman ſenate to its ancient dignity. Two of theſe epiſtles are ſtill extant. We likewiſe poſſeſs two very ſingular fragments of the private correſpondence of the ſenators on this occaſion. They diſcover the moſt exceſſive joy, and the moſt unbounded hopes. "Caſt away your indolence," it is thus that one of the ſenators addreſſes his friend, "emerge from your retire-" ments of Baiæ and Puteoli. Give yourſelf to the city, to the " ſenate. Rome flouriſhes, the whole republic flouriſhes. Thanks " to the Roman army, to an army truly Roman; at length, we " have recovered our juſt authority, the end of all our deſires. " We hear appeals, we appoint proconſuls, we create emperors; " perhaps too we may reſtrain them—to the wiſe, a word is ſuffi-" cient[15]." Theſe lofty expectations were, however, ſoon diſappointed; nor, indeed, was it poſſible, that the armies and the provinces ſhould long obey the luxurious and unwarlike nobles of Rome. On the ſlighteſt touch, the unſupported fabric of their pride and power fell to the ground. The expiring ſenate diſplayed a ſudden luſtre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguiſhed for ever.

A. D. 276. Tacitus is acknowledged by the army.

All that had yet paſſed at Rome was no more than a theatrical repreſentation, unleſs it was ratified by the more ſubſtantial power of the legions. Leaving the ſenators to enjoy their dream of freedom and ambition, Tacitus proceeded to the Thracian camp, and was there, by the Prætorian præfect, preſented to the aſſembled troops, as the prince whom they themſelves had demanded, and whom the

[15] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 230. 232, 233. The ſenators celebrated the happy reſtoration with hecatombs and public rejoicings.

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ſenate had beſtowed. As ſoon as the præfect was ſilent, the emperor addreſſed himſelf to the ſoldiers with eloquence and propriety. He gratified their avarice by a liberal diſtribution of treaſure, under the names of pay and donative. He engaged their eſteem by a ſpirited declaration, that although his age might diſable him from the performance of military exploits, his counſels ſhould never be unworthy of a Roman general, the ſucceſſor of the brave Aurelian [16].

The Alani invade Aſia, and are repulſed by Tacitus.

Whilſt the deceaſed emperor was making preparations for a ſecond expedition into the Eaſt, he had negociated with the Alani, a Scythian people, who pitched their tents in the neighbourhood of the lake Mœotis. Thoſe barbarians, allured by preſents and ſubſidies, had promiſed to invade Perſia with a numerous body of light cavalry. They were faithful to their engagements; but when they arrived on the Roman frontier, Aurelian was already dead, the deſign of the Perſian war was at leaſt ſuſpended, and the generals, who, during their interregnum, exerciſed a doubtful authority, were unprepared either to receive or to oppoſe them. Provoked by ſuch treatment, which they conſidered as trifling and perfidious, the Alani had recourſe to their own valour for their payment and revenge; and as they moved with the uſual ſwiftneſs of Tartars, they had ſoon ſpread themſelves over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galatia. The legions, who from the oppoſite ſhores of the Boſphorus could almoſt diſtinguiſh the flames of the cities and villages, impatiently urged their general to lead them againſt the invaders. The conduct of Tacitus was ſuitable to his age and ſtation. He convinced the barbarians, of the faith, as well as of the power, of the empire. Great numbers of the Alani, appeaſed by the punctual diſcharge of the engagements which Aurelian had contracted with them, relinquiſhed their booty and captives, and quietly retreated to their own

[16] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 228.

deſerts,

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deſerts, beyond the Phaſis. Againſt the remainder who refuſed peace, the Roman emperor waged, in perſon, a ſucceſsful war. Seconded by an army of brave and experienced veterans, in a few weeks he delivered the provinces of Aſia from the terror of the Scythian invaſion [17].

Death of the emperor Tacitus.

But the glory and life of Tacitus were of ſhort duration. Tranſported, in the depth of winter, from the ſoft retirement of Campania, to the foot of mount Caucaſus, he ſunk under the unnacuſtomed hardſhips of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For a while, the angry and ſelfiſh paſſions of the ſoldiers had been ſuſpended by the enthuſiaſm of public virtue. They ſoon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent, of the aged emperor. His mild and amiable character ſerved only to inſpire contempt, and he was inceſſantly tormented with factions which he could not aſſuage, and by demands which it was impoſſible to ſatisfy. Whatever flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public diſorders, Tacitus ſoon was convinced, that the licentiouſneſs of the army diſdained the feeble reſtraint of laws, and his laſt hour was haſtened by anguiſh and diſappointment. It may be doubtful whether the ſoldiers imbrued their hands in the blood of this innocent prince [18]. It is certain, that their inſolence was the cauſe of his death.

A. D. 276. April 12.

He expired at Tyana in Cappadocia, after a reign of only ſix months and about twenty days [19].

[17] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 230. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 57. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. Two paſſages in the life of Probus (p. 236. 238.) convince me, that theſe Scythian invaders of Pontus were Alani. If we may believe Zoſimus (l. i. p. 58.), Florianus purſued them as far as the Cimmerian Boſphorus. But he had ſcarcely time for ſo long and difficult an expedition.

[18] Eutropius and Aurelius Victor only ſay that he died; Victor Junior adds, that it was of a fever. Zoſimus and Zonaras affirm, that he was killed by the ſoldiers. Vopiſcus mentions both accounts, and ſeems to heſitate. Yet ſurely theſe jarring opinions are eaſily reconciled.

[19] According to the two Victors, he reigned exactly two hundred days.

The

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Uſurpation and death of his brother Florianus.

The eyes of Tacitus were ſcarcely cloſed, before his brother Florianus ſhewed himſelf unworthy to reign, by the haſty uſurpation of the purple, without expecting the approbation of the ſenate. The reverence for the Roman conſtitution, which yet influenced the camp and the provinces, was ſufficiently ſtrong to diſpoſe them to cenſure, but not to provoke them to oppoſe, the precipitate ambition of Florianus. The diſcontent would have evaporated in idle murmurs, had not the general of the Eaſt, the heroic Probus, boldly declared himſelf the avenger of the ſenate. The conteſt, however, was ſtill unequal; nor could the moſt able leader, at the head of the effeminate troops of Egypt and Syria, encounter, with any hopes of victory, the legions of Europe, whoſe irreſiſtible ſtrength appeared to ſupport the brother of Tacitus. But the fortune and activity of Probus triumphed over every obſtacle. The hardy veterans of his rival, accuſtomed to cold climates, ſickened and conſumed away in the ſultry heats of Cilicia, where the ſummer proved remarkably unwholeſome. Their numbers were diminiſhed by frequent deſertion, the paſſes of the mountains were feebly defended; Tarſus opened its gates, and the ſoldiers of Florianus, when they had permitted him to enjoy the Imperial title about three months, delivered the empire from civil war by the eaſy ſacrifice of a prince whom they deſpiſed[20]. July.

Their family ſubſiſts in obſcurity.

The perpetual revolutions of the throne had ſo perfectly eraſed every notion of hereditary right, that the family of an unfortunate emperor was incapable of exciting the jealouſy of his ſucceſſors. The children of Tacitus and Florianus were permitted to deſcend into a private ſtation, and to mingle with the general maſs of the people. Their poverty indeed became an additional ſafeguard to

[20] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 231. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 58, 59. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637. Aurelius Victor ſays, that Probus aſſumed the empire in Illyricum; an opinion which (though adopted by a very learned man) would throw that period of hiſtory into inextricable confuſion.

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their innocence. When Tacitus was elected by the ſenate, he reſigned his ample patrimony to the public ſervice[21], an act of generoſity ſpecious in appearance, but which evidently diſcloſed his intention of tranſmitting the empire to his deſcendants. The only conſolation of their fallen ſtate, was the remembrance of tranſient greatneſs, and a diſtant hope, the child of a flattering prophecy, that at the end of a thouſand years, a monarch of the race of Tacitus ſhould ariſe, the protector of the ſenate, the reſtorer of Rome, and the conqueror of the whole earth[22].

Character and elevation of the emperor Probus.

The peaſants of Illyricum, who had already given Claudius and Aurelian to the ſinking empire, had an equal right to glory in the elevation of Probus[23]. Above twenty years before, the emperor Valerian, with his uſual penetration, had diſcovered the riſing merit of the young ſoldier, on whom he conferred the rank of tribune, long before the age preſcribed by the military regulations. The tribune ſoon juſtified his choice, by a victory over a great body of Sarmatians, in which he ſaved the life of a near relation of Valerian; and deſerved to receive from the emperor's hand the collars, bracelets, ſpears, and banners, the mural and the civic crown, and all the honourable rewards reſerved by ancient Rome for ſucceſsful valour. The third, and afterwards the tenth, legion were intruſted to the command of Probus, who, in every ſtep of his promotion, ſhewed himſelf ſuperior to the ſtation which he filled. Africa and Pontus, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Nile, by turns afforded him the moſt ſplendid occaſions of diſplaying his perſonal proweſs and his conduct in war. Aurelian was indebted to him for the conqueſt of Egypt, and ſtill more indebted for the honeſt courage with which he

[21] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 229.

[22] He was to ſend judges to the Parthians, Perſians, and Sarmatians, a preſident to Taprobana, and a proconſul to the Roman iſland (ſuppoſed by Caſaubon and Salmaſius to mean Britain). Such a hiſtory as mine (ſays Vopiſcus with proper modeſty) will not ſubſiſt a thouſand years to expoſe or juſtify the prediction.

[23] For the private life of Probus, ſee Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 234—237.

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often checked the cruelty of his maſter. Tacitus, who deſired by the abilities of his generals to ſupply his own deficiency of military talents, named him commander in chief of all the eaſtern provinces, with five times the uſual ſalary, the promiſe of the conſulſhip, and the hope of a triumph. When Probus aſcended the Imperial throne, he was about forty-four years of age[24]; in the full poſſeſſion of his fame, of the love of the army, and of a mature vigour of mind and body.

His reſpectful conduct towards the ſenate.

His acknowledged merit, and the ſucceſs of his arms againſt Florianus, left him without an enemy or a competitor. Yet, if we may credit his own profeſſions, very far from being deſirous of the empire, he had accepted it with the moſt ſincere reluctance. "But "it is no longer in my power," ſays Probus, in a private letter, "to lay down a title ſo full of envy and of danger. I muſt con- "tinue to perſonate the character which the ſoldiers have impoſed "upon me[25]." His dutiful addreſs to the ſenate diſplayed the ſentiments, or at leaſt the language, of a Roman patriot: "When "you elected one of your order, conſcript fathers! to ſucceed the "emperor Aurelian, you acted in a manner ſuitable to your juſtice "and wiſdom. For you are the legal ſovereigns of the world, "and the power which you derive from your anceſtors, will de- "ſcend to your poſterity. Happy would it have been, if Flori- "anus, inſtead of uſurping the purple of his brother, like a pri- "vate inheritance, had expected what your majeſty might deter- "mine, either in his favour, or in that of any other perſon. The "prudent ſoldiers have puniſhed his raſhneſs. To me they have "offered the title of Auguſtus. But I ſubmit to your clemency my "pretenſions and my merits[26]." When this reſpectful epiſtle was

A. D. 276. Auguſt 3.

[24] According to the Alexandrian Chronicle, he was fifty at the time of his death.

[25] The letter was addreſſed to the Prætorian præfect, whom (on condition of his good behaviour) he promiſed to continue in his great office. See Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 237.

[26] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 237. The date of the letter is aſſuredly faulty. Inſtead of *Non. Februar.* we may read *Non. Auguſt.*

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read by the conſul, the ſenators were unable to diſguiſe their ſatiſfaction, that Probus ſhould condeſcend thus humbly to ſolicit a ſceptre which he already poſſeſſed. They celebrated with the warmeſt gratitude his virtues, his exploits, and above all his moderation. A decree immediately paſſed, without a diſſenting voice, to ratify the election of the eaſtern armies, and to confer on their chief all the ſeveral branches of the Imperial dignity: the names of Cæſar and Auguſtus, the title of Father of his country, the right of making in the ſame day three motions in the ſenate[27], the office of Pontifex Maximus, the tribunitian power, and the proconſular command; a mode of inveſtiture, which, though it ſeemed to multiply the authority of the emperor, expreſſed the conſtitution of the ancient republic. The reign of Probus correſponded with this fair beginning. The ſenate was permitted to direct the civil adminiſtration of the empire. Their faithful general aſſerted the honour of the Roman arms, and often laid at their feet crowns of gold and barbaric trophies, the fruits of his numerous victories[28]. Yet, whilſt he gratified their vanity, he muſt ſecretly have deſpiſed their indolence and weakneſs. Though it was every moment in their power to repeal the diſgraceful edict of Gallienus, the proud ſucceſſors of the Scipios patiently acquieſced in their excluſion from all military employments. They ſoon experienced, that thoſe who refuſe the ſword, muſt renounce the ſceptre.

Victories of Probus over the barbarians.

The ſtrength of Aurelian had cruſhed on every ſide the enemies of Rome. After his death they ſeemed to revive with an increaſe of fury and of numbers. They were again vanquiſhed by the active vigour of Probus, who, in a ſhort reign of about ſix years[29], equalled the

[27] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238. It is odd, that the ſenate ſhould treat Probus leſs favourably than Marcus Antoninus. That prince had received, even before the death of Pius, *Jus quintæ relationis*. See Capitolin. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 24.

[28] See the dutiful letter of Probus to the ſenate, after his German victories. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239.

[29] The date and duration of the reign of Probus are very correctly aſcertained by Cardinal Noris, in his learned work, De Epochis Syro-

the fame of ancient heroes, and reſtored peace and order to every province of the Roman world. The dangerous frontier of Rhætia he ſo firmly ſecured, that he left it without the ſuſpicion of an enemy. He broke the wandering power of the Sarmatian tribes, and by the terror of his arms compelled thoſe barbarians to relinquiſh their ſpoil. The Gothic nation courted the alliance of ſo warlike an emperor[30]. He attacked the Iſaurians in their mountains, beſieged and took ſeveral of their ſtrongeſt caſtles[31], and flattered himſelf that he had for ever ſuppreſſed a domeſtic foe, whoſe independence ſo deeply wounded the majeſty of the empire. The troubles excited by the uſurper Firmus in the Upper Egypt, had never been perfectly appeaſed, and the cities of Ptolemais and Coptos, fortified by the alliance of the Blemmyes, ſtill maintained an obſcure rebellion. The chaſtiſement of thoſe cities, and of their auxiliaries the ſavages of the South, is ſaid to have alarmed the court of Perſia[32], and the Great King ſued in vain for the friendſhip of Probus. Moſt of the exploits which diſtinguiſhed his reign, were atchieved by the perſonal valour and conduct of the emperor, inſomuch that the writer of his life expreſſes ſome amazement how, in ſo ſhort a time, a ſingle man could be preſent in ſo many diſtant wars. The remaining actions he intruſted to the care of his lieutenants, the judicious choice of whom forms no inconſiderable part of his glory. Carus, Diocletian, Maximian, Conſtantius, Galerius, Aſclepiodatus, Annibalianus, and a crowd of other chiefs, who afterwards aſcended or ſupported the throne, were trained to arms in the ſevere ſchool of Aurelian and Probus[33].

Syro-Macedonum, p. 96–105. A paſſage of Euſebius connects the ſecond year of Probus, with the æras of ſeveral of the Syrian cities.

[30] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239.

[31] Zoſimus (l. i. p. 62–65.) tells a very long and trifling ſtory of Lycius the Iſaurian robber.

[32] Zoſim. l. i. p. 6[illegible]. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 239, 240. But it ſeems incredible, that the defeat of the Savages of Æthiopia could affect the Perſian monarch.

[33] Beſides theſe well-known chiefs, ſeveral others are named by Vopiſcus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 241.), whoſe actions have not reached our knowledge.

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A. D. 277. He delivers Gaul from the invaſion of the Germans,

But the moſt important ſervice which Probus rendered to the republic, was the deliverance of Gaul, and the recovery of ſeventy flouriſhing cities oppreſſed by the barbarians of Germany, who, ſince the death of Aurelian, had ravaged that great province with impunity[34]. Among the various multitude of thoſe fierce invaders, we may diſtinguiſh, with ſome degree of clearneſs, three great armies, or rather nations, ſucceſſively vanquiſhed by the valour of Probus. He drove back the Francs into their moraſſes; a deſcriptive circumſtance from whence we may infer, that the confederacy known by the manly appellation of *Free*, already occupied the flat maritime country, interſected and almoſt overflown by the ſtagnating waters of the Rhine, and that ſeveral tribes of the Friſians and Batavians had acceded to their alliance. He vanquiſhed the Burgundians, a conſiderable people of the Vandalic race. They had wandered in queſt of booty from the banks of the Oder to thoſe of the Seine. They eſteemed themſelves ſufficiently fortunate to purchaſe, by the reſtitution of all their booty, the permiſſion of an undiſturbed retreat. They attempted to elude that article of the treaty. Their puniſhment was immediate and terrible[35]. But of all the invaders of Gaul, the moſt formidable were the Lygians, a diſtant people who reigned over a wide domain on the frontiers of Poland and Sileſia[36]. In the Lygian nation, the Arii held the firſt rank by their numbers and fierceneſs. "The Arii (it is thus that they are deſcribed by the "energy of Tacitus) ſtudy to improve by art and circumſtances the "innate terrors of their barbariſm. Their ſhields are black, their "bodies are painted black. They chuſe for the combat the darkeſt "hour of the night. Their hoſt advances, covered as it were with "a funereal ſhade[37]; nor do they often find an enemy capable of

[34] See the Cæſars of Julian, and Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238. 240, 241.

[35] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 62. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240. But the latter ſuppoſes the puniſhment inflicted with the conſent of their kings; if ſo, it was partial, like the offence.

[36] See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. Ptolemy places in their country the city of Caliſia, probably Caliſh in Sileſia.

[37] *Feralis umbra*, is the expreſſion of Tacitus: it is ſurely a very bold one.

"ſuſtaining

"ſuſtaining ſo ſtrange and infernal an aſpect. Of all our ſenſes, "the eyes are the firſt vanquiſhed in battle[38]." Yet the arms and diſcipline of the Romans eaſily diſcomfited theſe horrid phantoms. The Lygii were defeated in a general engagement, and Semno, the moſt renowned of their chiefs, fell alive into the hands of Probus. That prudent emperor, unwilling to reduce a brave people to deſpair, granted them an honourable capitulation, and permitted them to return in ſafety to their native country. But the loſſes which they ſuffered in the march, the battle, and the retreat, broke the power of the nation: nor is the Lygian name ever repeated in the hiſtory either of Germany or of the empire. The deliverance of Gaul is reported to have coſt the lives of four hundred thouſand of the invaders; a work of labour to the Romans, and of expence to the emperor, who gave a piece of gold for the head of every barbarian[39]. But as the fame of warriors is built on the deſtruction of human kind, we may naturally ſuſpect, that the ſanguinary account was multiplied by the avarice of the ſoldiers, and accepted without any very ſevere examination by the liberal vanity of Probus.

and carries his arms into Germany.

Since the expedition of Maximin, the Roman generals had confined their ambition to a defenſive war againſt the nations of Germany, who perpetually preſſed on the frontiers of the empire. The more daring Probus purſued his Gallic victories, paſſed the Rhine, and diſplayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Necker. He was fully convinced, that nothing could reconcile the minds of the barbarians to peace, unleſs they experienced in their own country the calamities of war. Germany, exhauſted by the ill ſucceſs of the laſt emigration, was aſtoniſhed by his preſence. Nine of the moſt conſiderable princes repaired to his camp, and fell proſtrate at his feet. Such a treaty was humbly received by the Germans, as it pleaſed the conqueror to dictate. He exacted a

[38] Tacit. Germania (c. 43.).

[39] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238.

ſtrict

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ſtrict reſtitution of the effects and captives which they had carried away from the provinces; and obliged their own magiſtrates to puniſh the more obſtinate robbers who preſumed to detain any part of the ſpoil. A conſiderable tribute of corn, cattle, and horſes, the only wealth of barbarians, was reſerved for the uſe of the garriſons which Probus eſtabliſhed on the limits of their territory. He even entertained ſome thoughts of compelling the Germans to relinquiſh the exerciſe of arms, and to truſt their differences to the juſtice, their ſafety to the power, of Rome. To accompliſh theſe ſalutary ends, the conſtant reſidence of an Imperial governor, ſupported by a numerous army, was indiſpenſably requiſite. Probus therefore judged it more expedient to defer the execution of ſo great a deſign; which was indeed rather of ſpecious than ſolid utility[40]. Had Germany been reduced into the ſtate of a province, the Romans, with immenſe labour and expence, would have acquired only a more extenſive boundary to defend againſt the fiercer and more active barbarians of Scythia.

He builds a wall from the Rhine to the Danube.

Inſtead of reducing the warlike natives of Germany to the condition of ſubjects, Probus contented himſelf with the humble expedient of raiſing a bulwark againſt their inroads. The country, which now forms the circle of Swabia, had been left deſert in the age of Auguſtus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants[41]. The fertility of the ſoil ſoon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of deſperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful poſſeſſion, and acknowledged, by the payment of tythes, the majeſty of the empire[42]. To protect theſe new ſubjects, a line of frontier garriſons was

[40] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 238, 239. Vopiſcus quotes a letter from the emperor to the ſenate, in which he mentions his deſign of reducing Germany into a province.

[41] Strabo, l. vii. According to Velleius Paterculus (ii. 108.), Maroboduus led his Marcomanni into Bohemia: Cluverius (German. Antiq. iii. 8.) proves that it was from Swabia.

[42] Theſe ſettlers from the payment of tythes were denominated, *Decumates*. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

gradually

gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to be practiſed, theſe garriſons were connected and covered by a ſtrong intrenchment of trees and paliſades. In the place of ſo rude a bulwark, the emperor Probus conſtructed a ſtone-wall of a conſiderable height, and ſtrengthened it by towers at convenient diſtances. From the neighbourhood of Newſtadt and Ratiſbon on the Danube, it ſtretched acroſs hills, vallies, rivers, and moraſſes, as far as Wimpfen on the Necker, and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine, after a winding courſe of near two hundred miles [43]. This important barrier, uniting the two mighty ſtreams that protected the provinces of Europe, ſeemed to fill up the vacant ſpace through which the barbarians, and particularly the Alemanni, could penetrate with the greateſt facility into the heart of the empire. But the experience of the world from China to Britain, has expoſed the vain attempt of fortifying any extenſive tract of country [44]. An active enemy, who can ſelect and vary his points of attack, muſt, in the end, diſcover ſome feeble ſpot or ſome unguarded moment. The ſtrength, as well as the attention, of the defenders is divided; and ſuch are the blind effects of terror on the firmeſt troops, that a line broken in a ſingle place, is almoſt inſtantly deſerted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected, may confirm the general obſervation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Alemanni. Its ſcattered ruins, univerſally aſcribed to the power of the Dæmon, now ſerve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peaſant.

[43] See Notes de l'Abbé de la Bleterie à la Germanie de Tacite, p. 183. His account of the wall is chiefly borrowed (as he ſays himſelf) from the *Alſatia Illuſtrata* of Schœpflin.

[44] See Recherches ſur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. ii. p. 81—102. The anonymous author is well acquainted with the globe in general, and with Germany in particular: with regard to the latter, he quotes a work of M. Hanſelman; but he ſeems to confound the wall of Probus, deſigned againſt the Alemanni, with the fortification of the Mattiaci, conſtructed in the neighbourhood of Francfort againſt the Catti.

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Introduction and ſettlement of the barbarians.

Among the uſeful conditions of peace impoſed by Probus on the vanquiſhed nations of Germany, was the obligation of ſupplying the Roman army with ſixteen thouſand recruits, the braveſt and moſt robuſt of their youth. The emperor diſperſed them through all the provinces, and diſtributed this dangerous reinforcement in ſmall bands, of fifty or ſixty each, among the national troops; judiciouſly obſerving, that the aid which the republic derived from the barbarians, ſhould be felt but not ſeen [45]. Their aid was now become neceſſary. The feeble elegance of Italy and the internal provinces could no longer ſupport the weight of arms. The hardy frontier of the Rhine and Danube ſtill produced minds and bodies equal to the labours of the camp; but a perpetual ſeries of wars had gradually diminiſhed their numbers. The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles of population, and not only deſtroyed the ſtrength of the preſent, but intercepted the hope of future, generations. The wiſdom of Probus embraced a great and beneficial plan of repleniſhing the exhauſted frontiers, by new colonies of captive or fugitive barbarians, on whom he beſtowed lands, cattle, inſtruments of huſbandry, and every encouragement that might engage them to educate a race of ſoldiers for the ſervice of the republic. Into Britain, and moſt probably into Cambridgeſhire [46], he tranſported a conſiderable body of Vandals. The impoſſibility of an eſcape, reconciled them to their ſituation, and in the ſubſequent troubles of that iſland, they approved themſelves the moſt faithful ſervants of the ſtate [47]. Great numbers of Franks and Gepidæ were ſettled on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. An hundred thouſand Baſtarnæ, expelled from their own

[45] He diſtributed about fifty or ſixty Barbarians to a *Numerus*, as it was then called, a corps with whoſe eſtabliſhed number we are not exactly acquainted.

[46] Camden's Britannia, Introduction, p 136; but he ſpeaks from a very doubtful conjecture.

[47] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 62. According to Vopiſcus, another body of Vandals was leſs faithful.

country,

country, cheerfully accepted an eſtabliſhment in Thrace, and ſoon imbibed the manners and ſentiments of Roman ſubjects[48]. But the expectations of Probus were too often diſappointed. The impatience and idleneſs of the barbarians could ill brook the ſlow labours of agriculture. Their unconquerable love of freedom, riſing againſt deſpotiſm, provoked them into haſty rebellions, alike fatal to themſelves and to the provinces[49]; nor could theſe artificial ſupplies, however repeated by ſucceeding emperors, reſtore the important limit of Gaul and Illyricum to its ancient and native vigour.

Daring enterpriſe of the Franks.

Of all the barbarians who abandoned their new ſettlements, and diſturbed the public tranquillity, a very ſmall number returned to their own country. For a ſhort ſeaſon they might wander in arms through the empire; but in the end they were ſurely deſtroyed by the power of a warlike emperor. The ſucceſsful raſhneſs of a party of Franks was attended, however, with ſuch memorable conſequences, that it ought not to be paſſed unnoticed. They had been eſtabliſhed by Probus, on the ſea-coaſt of Pontus, with a view of ſtrengthening the frontier againſt the inroads of the Alani. A fleet ſtationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine, fell into the hands of the Franks; and they reſolved, through unknown ſeas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phaſis to that of the Rhine. They eaſily eſcaped through the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont, and cruizing along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder, by frequent deſcents on the unſuſpecting ſhores of Aſia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuſe, in whoſe port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been ſunk, was ſacked by a handful of barbarians, who maſſacred the greateſt part of the trembling inhabitants. From the iſland of Sicily, the Franks proceeded to the columns of Hercules, truſted themſelves to the ocean,

[48] Hiſt. Aug. p. 240. They were probably expelled by the Goths. Zoſim. l. i. p. 66.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.

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coaſted round Spain and Gaul, and ſteering their triumphant courſe through the Britiſh channel, at length finiſhed their ſurpriſing voyage, by landing in ſafety on the Batavian or Friſian ſhores [50]. The example of their ſucceſs, inſtructing their countrymen to conceive the advantages, and to deſpiſe the dangers, of the ſea, pointed out to their enterpriſing ſpirit, a new road to wealth and glory.

Revolt of Saturninus in the Eaſt;

Notwithſtanding the vigilance and activity of Probus, it was almoſt impoſſible that he could at once contain in obedience every part of his wide extended dominions. The barbarians, who broke their chains, had ſeized the favourable opportunity of a domeſtic war. When the emperor marched to the relief of Gaul, he devolved the command of the Eaſt on Saturninus. That general, a man of merit and experience, was driven into rebellion by the abſence of his ſovereign, the levity of the Alexandrian people, the preſſing inſtances of his friends, and his own fears; but from the moment of his elevation, he never entertained a hope of empire, or even of life. "Alas!" he ſaid, "the republic has loſt a uſeful ſervant, "and the raſhneſs of an hour has deſtroyed the ſervices of many "years. You know not," continued he, "the miſery of ſovereign "power; a ſword is perpetually ſuſpended over our head. We "dread our very guards, we diſtruſt our companions. The choice "of action or of repoſe is no longer in our diſpoſition, nor is there "any age, or character, or conduct, that can protect us from the "cenſure of envy. In thus exalting me to the throne, you have "doomed me to a life of cares, and to an untimely fate. The only "conſolation which remains is, the aſſurance that I ſhall not fall "alone [51]." But as the former part of his prediction was verified by the victory, ſo the latter was diſappointed by the clemency

[50] Panegyr. Vet. v. 18. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 66.

[51] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 245, 246. The unfortunate orator had ſtudied rhetoric at Carthage, and was therefore more probably a Moor (Zoſim. l. i. p. 60.) than a Gaul, as Vopiſcus calls him.

of Probus. That amiable prince attempted even to ſave the unhappy Saturninus from the fury of the ſoldiers. He had more than once ſolicited the uſurper himſelf, to place ſome confidence in the mercy of a ſovereign who ſo highly eſteemed his character, that he had puniſhed, as a malicious informer, the firſt who related the improbable news of his defection [52]. Saturninus might, perhaps, have embraced the generous offer, had he not been reſtrained by the obſtinate diſtruſt of his adherents. Their guilt was deeper, and their hopes more ſanguine, than thoſe of their experienced leader.

A. D. 279.

The revolt of Saturninus was ſcarcely extinguiſhed in the Eaſt, before new troubles were excited in the Weſt, by the rebellion of Bonoſus and Proculus, in Gaul. The moſt diſtinguiſhed merit of thoſe two officers was their reſpective proweſs, of the one in the combats of Bacchus, of the other in thoſe of Venus [53], yet neither of them were deſtitute of courage and capacity, and both ſuſtained, with honour, the auguſt character which the fear of puniſhment had engaged them to aſſume, till they ſunk at length beneath the ſuperior genius of Probus. He uſed the victory with his accuſtomed moderation, and ſpared the fortunes as well as the lives of their innocent families [54].

A. D. 280. of Bonoſus and Proculus in Gaul.

The arms of Probus had now ſuppreſſed all the foreign and domeſtic enemies of the ſtate. His mild but ſteady adminiſtration confirmed the re-eſtabliſhment of the public tranquillity; nor was there left in the provinces a hoſtile barbarian, a tyrant, or even a robber, to revive the memory of paſt diſorders. It was time that the emperor ſhould reviſit Rome, and celebrate his own glory and

A. D. 281. Triumph of the emperor Probus.

[52] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638.

[53] A very ſurpriſing inſtance is recorded of the proweſs of Proculus. He had taken one hundred Sarmatian virgins. The reſt of the ſtory he muſt relate in his own language; Ex his unâ nocte decem inivi: omnes tamen, quod in me erat, mulieres intra dies quindecim reddidi. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 246.

[54] Proculus, who was a native of Albengue on the Genoeſe coaſt, armed two thouſand of his own ſlaves. His riches were great, but they were acquired by robbery. It was afterwards a ſaying of his family, Nec latrones eſſe, nec principes ſibi placere. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 247.

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the general happineſs. The triumph due to the valour of Probus was conducted with a magnificence ſuitable to his fortune, and the people who had ſo lately admired the trophies of Aurelian, gazed with equal pleaſure on thoſe of his heroic ſucceſſor [55]. We cannot, on this occaſion, forget the deſperate courage of about fourſcore Gladiators, reſerved with near ſix hundred others, for the inhuman ſports of the amphitheatre. Diſdaining to ſhed their blood for the amuſement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from the place of their confinement, and filled the ſtreets of Rome with blood and confuſion. After an obſtinate reſiſtance, they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular forces; but they obtained at leaſt an honourable death, and the ſatisfaction of a juſt revenge [56].

His diſcipline.

The military diſcipline which reigned in the camps of Probus, was leſs cruel than that of Aurelian, but it was equally rigid and exact. The latter had puniſhed the irregularities of the ſoldiers with unrelenting ſeverity, the former prevented them by employing the legions in conſtant and uſeful labours. When Probus commanded in Egypt, he executed many conſiderable works for the ſplendour and benefit of that rich country. The navigation of the Nile, ſo important to Rome itſelf, was improved; and temples, bridges, porticoes, and palaces, were conſtructed by the hands of the ſoldiers, who acted by turns as architects, as engineers, and as huſbandmen [57]. It was reported of Hannibal, that, in order to preſerve his troops from the dangerous temptations of idleneſs, he had obliged them to form large plantations of olive trees along the coaſt of Africa [58]. From a ſimilar principle, Probus exerciſed his legions in covering, with rich vineyards, the hills of Gaul and

[55] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.
[56] Zoſim. l. i. p. 66.
[57] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 236.
[58] Aurel. Victor in Prob. But the policy of Hannibal, unnoticed by any more ancient writer, is irreconcileable with the hiſtory of his life. He left Africa when he was nine years old, returned to it when he was forty-five, and immediately loſt his army in the deciſive battle of Zama. Livius, xxx. 37.

Pannonia, and two conſiderable ſpots are deſcribed, which were entirely dug and planted by military labour [59]. One of theſe, known under the name of Mount Almo, was ſituated near Sirmium, the country where Probus was born, for which he ever retained a partial affection, and whoſe gratitude he endeavoured to ſecure, by converting into tillage a large and unhealthy tract of marſhy ground. An army thus employed, conſtituted perhaps the moſt uſeful, as well as the braveſt, portion of Roman ſubjects.

His death.

But in the proſecution of a favourite ſcheme, the beſt of men, ſatisfied with the rectitude of their intentions, are ſubject to forget the bounds of moderation; nor did Probus himſelf ſufficiently conſult the patience and diſpoſition of his fierce legionaries [60]. The dangers of the military profeſſion ſeem only to be compenſated by a life of pleaſure and idleneſs; but if the duties of the ſoldier are inceſſantly aggravated by the labours of the peaſant, he will at laſt ſink under the intolerable burden, or ſhake it off with indignation. The imprudence of Probus is ſaid to have inflamed the diſcontent of his troops. More attentive to the intereſts of mankind than to thoſe of the army, he expreſſed the vain hope, that, by the eſtabliſhment of univerſal peace, he ſhould ſoon aboliſh the neceſſity of a ſtanding and mercenary force [61]. The unguarded expreſſion proved fatal to him. In one of the hotteſt days of ſummer, as he ſeverely urged the unwholeſome labour of draining the marſhes of Sirmium, the ſoldiers, impatient of fatigue, on a ſudden threw down their tools, graſped their arms, and broke out into a furious mutiny. The emperor, conſcious of his danger, took refuge in a lofty tower, conſtructed for the purpoſe of ſurveying the progreſs

[59] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240. Eutrop. ix. 17. Aurel. Victor in Prob. Victor Junior. He revoked the prohibition of Domitian, and granted a general permiſſion of planting vines to the Gauls, the Britons, and the Pannonians.

[60] Julian beſtows a ſevere, and indeed exceſſive, cenſure on the rigour of Probus, who, as he thinks, almoſt deſerved his fate.

[61] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 241. He laviſhes on this idle hope a large ſtock of very fooliſh eloquence.

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A. D. 282. August.

of the work [62]. The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified. They then lamented their fatal rashness, forgot the severity of the emperor, whom they had massacred, and hastened to perpetuate, by an honourable monument, the memory of his virtues and victories [63].

Election and character of Carus.

When the legions had indulged their grief and repentance for the death of Probus, their unanimous consent declared Carus, his Prætorian præfect, the most deserving of the Imperial throne. Every circumstance that relates to this prince appears of a mixed and doubtful nature. He gloried in the title of Roman Citizen; and affected to compare the purity of *his* blood, with the foreign and even barbarous origin of the preceding emperors; yet the most inquisitive of his contemporaries, very far from admitting his claim, have variously deduced his own birth, or that of his parents, from Illyricum, from Gaul, or from Africa [64]. Though a soldier, he had received a learned education; though a senator, he was invested with the first dignity of the army; and in an age, when the civil and military professions began to be irrecoverably separated from each other, they were united in the person of Carus. Notwithstanding the severe justice which he exercised against the assassins of Probus, to whose favour and esteem he was highly indebted, he could not escape the suspicion of being accessary to a deed from whence he derived the principal advantage. He enjoyed, at least before his elevation, an acknowledged character of virtue and

[62] Turris ferrata. It seems to have been a moveable tower, and cased with iron.

[63] Probus, et vere probus situs est: Victor omnium gentium Barbararum: victor etiam tyrannorum.

[64] Yet all this may be conciliated. He was born at Narbonne in Illyricum, confounded by Eutropius with the more famous city of that name in Gaul. His father might be an African, and his mother a noble Roman. Carus himself was educated in the capital. See Scaliger, Animadversion. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 241.

abilities;

abilities[65]; but his auſtere temper inſenſibly degenerated into moroſeneſs and cruelty; and the imperfect writers of his life almoſt heſitate whether they ſhall not rank him in the number of Roman tyrants[66]. When Carus aſſumed the purple, he was about ſixty years of age, and his two ſons Carinus and Numerian had already attained the ſeaſon of manhood[67].

The ſentiments of the ſenate and people.

The authority of the ſenate expired with Probus; nor was the repentance of the ſoldiers diſplayed by the ſame dutiful regard for the civil power, which they had teſtified after the unfortunate death of Aurelian. The election of Carus was decided without expecting the approbation of the ſenate, and the new emperor contented himſelf with announcing, in a cold and ſtately epiſtle, that he had aſcended the vacant throne[68]. A behaviour ſo very oppoſite to that of his amiable predeceſſor, afforded no favourable preſage of the new reign; and the Romans, deprived of power and freedom, aſſerted their privilege of licentious murmurs[69]. The voice of congratulation and flattery was not however ſilent; and we may ſtill peruſe, with pleaſure and contempt, an eclogue, which was compoſed on the acceſſion of the emperor Carus. Two ſhepherds, avoiding the noon-tide heat, retire into the cave of Faunus. On a ſpreading beech they diſcover ſome recent characters. The rural deity had deſcribed, in prophetic verſes, the felicity promiſed to the empire, under the reign of ſo great a prince. Faunus hails the approach of that hero, who, receiving on his ſhoulders the ſinking weight of the

[65] Probus had requeſted of the ſenate an equeſtrian ſtatue and a marble palace, at the public expence, as a juſt recompence of the ſingular merit of Carus. Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 249.

[66] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 242. 249. Julian excludes the emperor Carus and both his ſons from the banquet of the Cæſars.

[67] John Malela, tom. i. p. 401. But the authority of that ignorant Greek is very ſlight. He ridiculouſly derives from Carus, the city of Carrhæ, and the province of Caria, the latter of which is mentioned by Homer.

[68] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 249. Carus congratulated the ſenate, that one of their own order was made emperor.

[69] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 242.

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Roman world, ſhall extinguiſh war and faction, and once again reſtore the innocence and ſecurity of the golden age[70].

Carus defeats the Sarmatians, and marches into the Eaſt;

It is more than probable, that theſe elegant trifles never reached the ears of a veteran general, who, with the conſent of the legions, was preparing to execute the long ſuſpended deſign of the Perſian war. Before his departure for this diſtant expedition, Carus conferred on his two ſons, Carinus and Numerian, the title of Cæſar, and inveſting the former with almoſt an equal ſhare of the Imperial power, directed the young prince, firſt to ſuppreſs ſome troubles which had ariſen in Gaul, and afterwards to fix the ſeat of his reſidence at Rome, and to aſſume the government of the weſtern provinces[71]. The ſafety of Illyricum was confirmed by a memorable defeat of the Sarmatians; ſixteen thouſand of thoſe barbarians remained on the field of battle, and the number of captives amounted to twenty thouſand. The old emperor, animated with the fame and proſpect of victory, purſued his march, in the midſt of winter, through the countries of Thrace and Aſia Minor, and at length, with his younger ſon Numerian, arrived on the confines of the Perſian monarchy. There, encamping on the ſummit of a lofty mountain, he pointed out to his troops the opulence and luxury of the enemy whom they were about to invade.

A. D. 283. he gives audience to the Perſian ambaſſadors.

The ſucceſſor of Artaxerxes, Varanes or Bahram, though he had ſubdued the Segeſtans, one of the moſt warlike nations of Upper Aſia[72], was alarmed at the approach of the Romans, and endeavoured to retard their progreſs by a negociation of peace. His ambaſſadors entered the camp about ſun-ſet, at the time when the troops were ſatisfying their hunger with a frugal repaſt. The

[70] See the firſt eclogue of Calphurnius. The deſign of it is preferred by Fontenelle, to that of Virgil's Pollio. See tom. iii. p. 148.

[71] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 353. Eutropius, ix. 18. Pagi. Annal.

[72] Agathias, l. iv. p. 135. We find one of his ſayings in the Bibliothéque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. "The definition of humanity includes all other virtues."

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Perſians expreſſed their deſire of being introduced to the preſence of the Roman emperor. They were at length conducted to a ſoldier, who was ſeated on the graſs. A piece of ſtale bacon and a few hard peaſe compoſed his ſupper. A coarſe woollen garment of purple was the only circumſtance that announced his dignity. The conference was conducted with the ſame diſregard of courtly elegance. Carus, taking off a cap which he wore to conceal his baldneſs, aſſured the ambaſſadors, that, unleſs their maſter acknowledged the ſuperiority of Rome, he would ſpeedily render Perſia as naked of trees, as his own head was deſtitute of hair[73]. Notwithſtanding ſome traces of art and preparation, we may diſcover in this ſcene the manners of Carus, and the ſevere ſimplicity which the martial princes, who ſucceeded Gallienus, had already reſtored in the Roman camps. The miniſters of the Great King trembled and retired.

His victories and extraordinary death.

The threats of Carus were not without effect. He ravaged Meſopotamia, cut in pieces whatever oppoſed his paſſage, made himſelf maſter of the great cities of Seleucia and Cteſiphon (which ſeemed to have ſurrendered without reſiſtance), and carried his victorious arms beyond the Tigris[74]. He had ſeized the favourable moment for an invaſion. The Perſian councils were diſtracted by domeſtic factions, and the greater part of their forces were detained on the frontiers of India. Rome and the Eaſt received with tranſport the news of ſuch important advantages. Flattery and hope painted, in the moſt lively colours, the fall of Perſia, the conqueſt of Arabia, the ſubmiſſion of Egypt, and a laſting deliverance from the inroads of the Scythian nations[75]. But the reign of Carus was deſtined to expoſe the vanity of predictions. They were ſcarcely uttered

A. D. 283. December 25.

[73] Syneſius tells this ſtory of Carinus; and it is much more natural to underſtand it of Carus, than (as Petavius and Tillemont chuſe to do) of Probus.

[74] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Eutropius, ix. 18. The two Victors.

[75] To the Perſian victory of Carus, I refer the dialogue of the *Philopatris*, which has ſo long been an object of diſpute among the learned. But to explain and juſtify my opinion, would require a diſſertation.

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before they were contradicted by his death; an event attended with ſuch ambiguous circumſtances, that it may be related in a letter from his own ſecretary to the præfect of the city. "Carus," ſays he, "our deareſt emperor, was confined by ſickneſs to his bed, "when a furious tempeſt aroſe in the camp. The darkneſs which "overſpread the ſky was ſo thick, that we could no longer diſ- "tinguiſh each other; and the inceſſant flaſhes of lightning took "from us the knowledge of all that paſſed in the general confuſion. "Immediately after the moſt violent clap of thunder, we heard a "ſudden cry, that the emperor was dead; and it ſoon appeared, "that his chamberlains, in a rage of grief, had ſet fire to the royal "pavillion, a circumſtance which gave riſe to the report that Carus "was killed by lightning. But, as far as we have been able to in- "veſtigate the truth, his death was the natural effect of his diſ- "order[76]."

He is ſucceeded by his two ſons Carinus and Numerian.

The vacancy of the throne was not productive of any diſturbance. The ambition of the aſpiring generals was checked by their mutual fears, and young Numerian, with his abſent brother Carinus, were unanimouſly acknowledged as Roman emperors. The public expected that the ſucceſſor of Carus would purſue his father's footſteps, and without allowing the Perſians to recover from their conſternation, would advance ſword in hand to the palaces of Suſa and Ecbatana[77]. But the legions, however ſtrong in numbers and diſcipline, were diſmayed by the moſt abject ſuperſtition. Notwithſtanding all the arts that were practiſed to diſguiſe the manner of the late emperor's death, it was found impoſſible to remove the opinion of the multitude, and the power of opinion is irreſiſtible. Places or perſons ſtruck with lightning were conſidered by the ancients with

[76] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Yet Eutropius, Feſtus, Rufus, the two Victors, Jerome, Sidonius Apollinaris, Syncellus, and Zonaras, all aſcribe the death of Carus to lightning.

[77] See Nemeſian. Cynegeticon, v. 71, &c.

pious

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pious horror, as ſingularly devoted to the wrath of Heaven[78]. An oracle was remembered, which marked the river Tigris as the fatal boundary of the Roman arms. The troops, terrified with the fate of Carus and with their own danger, called aloud on young Numerian to obey the will of the gods, and to lead them away from this inauſpicious ſcene of war. The feeble emperor was unable to ſubdue their obſtinate prejudice, and the Perſians wondered at the unexpected retreat of a victorious enemy[79].

A. D. 384. Vices of Carinus.

The intelligence of the myſterious fate of the late emperor, was ſoon carried from the frontiers of Perſia to Rome; and the ſenate, as well as the provinces, congratulated the acceſſion of the ſons of Carus. Theſe fortunate youths were ſtrangers, however, to that conſcious ſuperiority, either of birth or of merit, which can alone render the poſſeſſion of a throne eaſy, and as it were natural. Born and educated in a private ſtation, the election of their father raiſed them at once to the rank of princes; and his death, which happened about ſixteen months afterwards, left them the unexpected legacy of a vaſt empire. To ſuſtain with temper this rapid elevation, an uncommon ſhare of virtue and prudence was requiſite; and Carinus, the elder of the brothers, was more than commonly deficient in thoſe qualities. In the Gallic war, he diſcovered ſome degree of perſonal courage[80]; but from the moment of his arrival at Rome, he abandoned himſelf to the luxury of the capital, and to the abuſe of his fortune. He was ſoft yet cruel; devoted to pleaſure, but deſtitute of taſte; and though exquiſitely ſuſceptible of vanity, indifferent to the public eſteem. In the courſe of a few months, he ſucceſſively married and divorced nine wives, moſt of whom he left pregnant; and notwithſtanding this legal inconſtancy, found time to indulge

[78] See Feſtus and his commentators, on the word *Scribonianum*. *Places* ſtruck with lightning, were ſurrounded with a wall: *things* were buried with myſterious ceremony.

[79] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250. Aurelius Victor ſeems to believe the prediction, and to approve the retreat.

[80] Nemeſian. Cygneticon, v. 69. He was a contemporary, but a poet.

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ſuch a variety of irregular appetites, as brought diſhonour on himſelf and on the nobleſt houſes of Rome. He beheld with inveterate hatred all thoſe who might remember his former obſcurity, or cenſure his preſent conduct. He baniſhed, or put to death, the friends and counſellors whom his father had placed about him, to guide his inexperienced youth; and he perſecuted with the meaneſt revenge his ſchool-fellows and companions, who had not ſufficiently reſpected the latent majeſty of the emperor. With the ſenators, Carinus affected a lofty and regal demeanour, frequently declaring, that he deſigned to diſtribute their eſtates among the populace of Rome. From the dregs of that populace, he ſelected his favourites, and even his miniſters. The palace, and even the Imperial table, was filled with ſingers, dancers, proſtitutes, and all the various retinue of vice and folly. One of his door-keepers [81] he intruſted with the government of the city. In the room of the Prætorian præfect, whom he put to death, Carinus ſubſtituted one of the miniſters of his looſer pleaſures. Another who poſſeſſed the ſame, or even a more infamous, title to favour, was inveſted with the conſulſhip. A confidential ſecretary, who had acquired uncommon ſkill in the art of forgery, delivered the indolent emperor, with his own conſent, from the irkſome duty of ſigning his name.

When the emperor Carus undertook the Perſian war, he was induced, by motives of affection as well as policy, to ſecure the fortunes of his family, by leaving in the hands of his eldeſt ſon the armies and provinces of the Weſt. The intelligence which he ſoon received of the conduct of Carinus, filled him with ſhame and regret; nor had he concealed his reſolution of ſatisfying the republic by a ſevere act of juſtice, and of adopting, in the place of an unworthy ſon, the brave and virtuous Conſtantius, who at that time

[81] *Cancellarius.* This word, ſo humble in its origin, has by a ſingular fortune roſe into the title of the firſt great office of ſtate in the monarchies of Europe. See Caſaubon and Salmaſius, ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 253.

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was governor of Dalmatia. But the elevation of Conſtantius was for a while deferred; and as ſoon as the father's death had releaſed Carinus from the controul of fear or decency, he diſplayed to the Romans the extravagancies of Elagabalus, aggravated by the cruelty of Domitian[82].

He celebrates the Roman games.

The only merit of the adminiſtration of Carinus that hiſtory could record or poetry celebrate, was the uncommon ſplendour with which, in his own and his brother's name, he exhibited the Roman games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when the courtiers of Diocletian repreſented to their frugal ſovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predeceſſor, he acknowledged, that the reign of Carinus had indeed been a reign of pleaſure[83]. But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Diocletian might juſtly deſpiſe, was enjoyed with ſurpriſe and tranſport by the Roman people. The oldeſt of the citizens, recollecting the ſpectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the ſecular games of the emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all ſurpaſſed by the ſuperior magnificence of Carinus[84].

Spectacles of Rome.

The ſpectacles of Carinus may therefore be beſt illuſtrated by the obſervation of ſome particulars, which hiſtory has condeſcended to relate concerning thoſe of his predeceſſors. If we confine ourſelves ſolely to the hunting of wild beaſts, however we may cenſure the vanity of the deſign or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confeſs, that neither before nor ſince the time of the Romans, ſo much art and expence have ever been laviſhed for the amuſe-

[82] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 253, 254. Eutropius, ix. 19. Victor Junior. The reign of Diocletian indeed was ſo long and proſperous, that it muſt have been very unfavourable to the reputation of Carinus.

[83] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 254. He calls him Carus, but the ſenſe is ſufficiently obvious, and the words were often confounded.

[84] See Calphurnius, Eclog. vii. 43. We may obſerve, that the ſpectacles of Probus were ſtill recent, and that the poet is ſeconded by the hiſtorian.

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ment of the people[85]. By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were tranſplanted into the midſt of the circus. The ſpacious and ſhady foreſt was immediately filled with a thouſand oſtriches, a thouſand ſtags, a thouſand fallow deer, and a thouſand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuoſity of the multitude. The tragedy of the ſucceeding day conſiſted in the maſſacre of an hundred lions, an equal number of lioneſſes, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears[86]. The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his ſucceſſor exhibited in the ſecular games, was leſs remarkable by the number than by the ſingularity of the animals. Twenty zebras diſplayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people[87]. Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftieſt and moſt harmleſs creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contraſted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tygers, the moſt implacable ſavages of the torrid zone. The unoffending ſtrength with which Nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds, was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile[88], and a majeſtic troop of thirty-two elephants[89]. While the populace gazed with ſtupid wonder on the ſplendid ſhow, the naturaliſt might indeed obſerve the figure and properties of ſo many different ſpecies, tranſported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre

[85] The philoſopher Montaigne (Eſſais, l. iii. 6.) gives a very juſt and lively view of Roman magnificence in theſe ſpectacles.

[86] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 240.

[87] They are called *Onagri*; but the number is too inconſiderable for mere wild-aſſes. Cuper (de Elephantis Exercitat. ii. 7.) has proved from Oppian, Dion, and an anonymous Greek, that zebras had been ſeen at Rome. They were brought from ſome iſland of the ocean, perhaps Madagaſcar.

[88] Carinus gave an hippopotamus (ſee Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 66.). In the latter ſpectacles, I do not recollect any crocodiles, of which Auguſtus once exhibited thirty-ſix.—Dion Caſſius, l. lv. p. 781.

[89] Capitolin. in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 164, 165. We are not acquainted with the animals whom he calls *archeleontes*, ſome read *argoleontes*, others *agrioleontes*: both corrections are very nugatory.

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of Rome. But this accidental benefit, which ſcience might derive from folly, is ſurely inſufficient to juſtify ſuch a wanton abuſe of the public riches. There occurs, however, a ſingle inſtance in the firſt Punic war, in which the ſenate wiſely connected this amuſement of the multitude with the intereſt of the ſtate. A conſiderable number of elephants, taken in the defeat of the Carthaginian army, were driven through the circus by a few ſlaves, armed only with blunt javelins [90]. The uſeful ſpectacle ſerved to impreſs the Roman ſoldier with a juſt contempt for thoſe unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war.

The amphitheatre.

The hunting or exhibition of wild beaſts, was conducted with a magnificence ſuitable to a people who ſtyled themſelves the maſters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment leſs expreſſive of Roman greatneſs. Poſterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which ſo well deſerved the epithet of Coloſſal [91]. It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred and ſixty-four feet in length, and four hundred and ſixty-ſeven in breadth, founded on fourſcore arches, and riſing, with four ſucceſſive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet [92]. The outſide of the edifice was encruſted with marble, and decorated with ſtatues. The ſlopes of the vaſt concave, which formed the inſide, were filled and ſurrounded with ſixty or eighty rows of ſeats of marble likewiſe, covered with cuſhions, and capable of receiving with eaſe above fourſcore thouſand ſpectators [93]. Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name

[90] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. viii. 6. from the annals of Piſo.

[91] See Maffei, Verona Illuſtrata, P. iv. l. i. c. 2.

[92] Maffei, l. ii. c. 2. The height was very much exaggerated by the ancients. It reached almoſt to the heavens, according to Calphurnius (Eclog. vii. 23.), and ſurpaſſed the ken of human ſight, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (xvi. 10.). Yet how trifling to the great pyramid of Egypt, which riſes 500 feet perpendicular!

[93] According to different copies of Victor, we read 77,000, or 87,000 ſpectators; but Maffei (l. ii. c. 12.) finds room on the open ſeats for no more than 34,000. The remainder were contained in the upper covered galleries.

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the doors were very aptly diſtinguiſhed) poured forth the immenſe multitude; and the entrances, paſſages, and ſtair-caſes, were contrived with ſuch exquiſite ſkill, that each perſon, whether of the ſenatorial, the equeſtrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his deſtined place without trouble or confuſion [94]. Nothing was omitted which, in any reſpect, could be ſubſervient to the convenience and pleaſure of the ſpectators. They were protected from the ſun and rain by an ample canopy, occaſionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreſhed by the playing of fountains, and profuſely impregnated by the grateful ſcent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or ſtage, was ſtrewed with the fineſt ſand, and ſucceſſively aſſumed the moſt different forms. At one moment it ſeemed to riſe out of the earth, like the garden of the Heſperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The ſubterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhauſtible ſupply of water; and what had juſt before appeared a level plain, might be ſuddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed veſſels, and repleniſhed with the monſters of the deep [95]. In the decoration of theſe ſcenes, the Roman emperors diſplayed their wealth and liberality; and we read on various occaſions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre conſiſted either of ſilver, or of gold, or of amber [96]. The poet who deſcribes the games of Carinus, in the character of a ſhepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms, that the nets deſigned as a defence againſt the wild beaſts, were of gold wire; that the porticoes were gilded, and that the *belt* or circle which divided the ſeveral ranks of ſpectators from

[94] See Maffei, l. ii. c. 5—12. He treats the very difficult ſubject with all poſſible clearneſs, and like an architect, as well as an antiquarian.

[95] Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 64. 73. Theſe lines are curious, and the whole Eclogue has been of infinite uſe to Maffei. Calphurnius, as well as Martial (ſee his firſt book), was a poet; but when they deſcribed the amphitheatre, they both wrote from their own ſenſes, and to thoſe of the Romans.

[96] Conſult Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xxxiii. 16. xxxvii. 11.

each

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each other, was ſtudded with a precious Moſaic of beautiful ſtones [97].

A. D. 284. Sept. 12.

In the midſt of this glittering pageantry, the emperor Carinus, ſecure of his fortune, enjoyed the acclamations of the people, the flattery of his courtiers, and the ſongs of the poets, who, for want of a more eſſential merit, were reduced to celebrate the divine graces of his perſon [98]. In the ſame hour, but at the diſtance of nine hundred miles from Rome, his brother expired; and a ſudden revolution transferred into the hands of a ſtranger the ſceptre of the houſe of Carus [99].

Return of Numerian with the army from Perſia.

The ſons of Carus never ſaw each other after their father's death. The arrangements which their new ſituation required, were probably deferred till the return of the younger brother to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to the young emperors, for the glorious ſucceſs of the Perſian war [100]. It is uncertain whether they intended to divide between them the adminiſtration, or the provinces, of the empire; but it is very unlikely that their union would have proved of any long duration. The jealouſy of power muſt have been inflamed by the oppoſition of characters. In the moſt corrupt of times, Carinus was unworthy to live: Numerian deſerved to reign in a happier period. His affable manners and gentle virtues ſecured him, as ſoon as they became known, the regard and affections of the public. He poſſeſſed the elegant accompliſhments of a poet and orator, which dignify as well as adorn the humbleſt and the moſt exalted ſtation. His eloquence, however it was applauded by the ſenate, was formed not ſo much on the model of Cicero, as on that

[97] Balteus en gemmis, en in lita porticus auro
Certatim radiant, &c. Calphurn. vii.

[98] Et Martis vultus et Apollinis eſſe putavi, ſays Calphurnius; but John Malela, who had perhaps ſeen pictures of Carinus, deſcribes him as thick, ſhort, and white, tom. i. p. 403.

[99] With regard to the time when theſe Roman games were celebrated, Scaliger, Salmaſius, and Cuper, have given themſelves a great deal of trouble to perplex a very clear ſubject.

[100] Nemeſianus (in the Cynegeticons) ſeems to anticipate in his fancy that auſpicious day.

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of the modern declaimers; but in an age very far from being deſtitute of poetical merit, he contended for the prize with the moſt celebrated of his contemporaries, and ſtill remained the friend of his rivals; a circumſtance which evinces either the goodneſs of his heart, or the ſuperiority of his genius [101]. But the talents of Numerian were rather of the contemplative, than of the active kind. When his father's elevation reluctantly forced him from the ſhade of retirement, neither his temper nor his purſuits had qualified him for the command of armies. His conſtitution was deſtroyed by the hardſhips of the Perſian war; and he had contracted, from the heat of the climate [102], ſuch a weakneſs in his eyes, as obliged him, in the courſe of a long retreat, to confine himſelf to the ſolitude and darkneſs of a tent or litter. The adminiſtration of all affairs, civil as well as military, was devolved on Arrius Aper, the Prætorian præfect, who, to the power of his important office, added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The Imperial pavilion was ſtrictly guarded by his moſt truſty adherents; and during many days, Aper delivered to the army the ſuppoſed mandates of their inviſible ſovereign [103].

Death of Numerian.

It was not till eight months after the death of Carus, that the Roman army, returning by ſlow marches from the banks of the Tigris, arrived on thoſe of the Thracian Boſphorus. The legions halted at Chalcedon in Aſia, while the court paſſed over to Heraclea, on the European ſide of the Propontis [104]. But a report ſoon circulated through the camp, at firſt in ſecret whiſpers, and at

[101] He won all the crowns from Nemeſianus, with whom he vied in didactic poetry. The ſenate erected a ſtatue to the ſon of Carus, with a very ambiguous inſcription, "To the moſt powerful of orators." See Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251.

[102] A more natural cauſe, at leaſt, than that aſſigned by Vopiſcus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251.), inceſſantly weeping for his father's death.

[103] In the Perſian war, Aper was ſuſpected of a deſign to betray Carus. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 250.

[104] We are obliged to the Alexandrian Chronicle, p. 274, for the knowledge of the time and place where Diocletian was elected emperor.

length

length in loud clamours, of the emperor's death, and of the preſumption of his ambitious miniſter, who ſtill exerciſed the ſovereign power in the name of a prince who was no more. The impatience of the ſoldiers could not long ſupport a ſtate of ſuſpenſe. With rude curioſity they broke into the Imperial tent, and diſcovered only the corpſe of Numerian [105]. The gradual decline of his health might have induced them to believe that his death was natural; but the concealment was interpreted as an evidence of guilt, and the meaſures which Aper had taken to ſecure his election, became the immediate occaſion of his ruin. Yet, even in the tranſport of their rage and grief, the troops obſerved a regular proceeding, which proves how firmly diſcipline had been re-eſtabliſhed by the martial ſucceſſors of Gallienus. A general aſſembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was tranſported in chains, as a priſoner and a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midſt of the camp, and the generals and tribunes formed a great military council. They ſoon announced to the multitude, that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, commander of the domeſtics or body-guards, as the perſon the moſt capable of revenging and ſucceeding their beloved emperor. The future fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the preſent hour. Conſcious that the ſtation which he had filled, expoſed him to ſome ſuſpicions, Diocletian aſcended the tribunal, and raiſing his eyes towards the Sun, made a ſolemn profeſſion of his own innocence, in the preſence of that all-ſeeing Deity [106]. Then, aſſuming the tone of a ſovereign and a judge, he commanded that Aper ſhould be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. "This man," ſaid he, "is the mur-"derer of Numerian;" and, without giving him time to enter on a

A. D. 284. Sept. 17. Election of the emperor Diocletian.

[105] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 251. Eutrop. ix. 88. Hieronym. in Chron. According to theſe *judicious* writers, the death of Numerian was diſcovered by the ſtench of his dead body. Could no aromatics be found in the Imperial houſehold?

[106] Aurel. Victor. Eutropius, ix. 20. Hieronym. in Chron.

dangerous

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dangerous juſtification, drew his ſword, and buried it in the breaſt of the unfortunate præfect. A charge ſupported by ſuch deciſive proof, was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the juſtice and authority of the emperor Diocletian [107].

Defeat and death of Carinus.

Before we enter upon the memorable reign of that prince, it will be proper to puniſh and diſmiſs the unworthy brother of Numerian. Carinus poſſeſſed arms and treaſures ſufficient to ſupport his legal title to the empire. But his perſonal vices overbalanced every advantage of birth and ſituation. The moſt faithful ſervants of the father deſpiſed the incapacity, and dreaded the cruel arrogance, of the ſon. The hearts of the people were engaged in favour of his rival, and even the ſenate was inclined to prefer an uſurper to a tyrant. The arts of Diocletian inflamed the general diſcontent; and the winter was empoyed in ſecret intrigues, and open preparations for a civil war.

A. D. 285. May.

In the ſpring, the forces of the Eaſt and of the Weſt encountered each other in the plains of Margus, a ſmall city of Mæſia, in the neighbourhood of the Danube [108]. The troops, ſo lately returned from the Perſian war, had acquired their glory at the expence of health and numbers, nor were they in a condition to contend with the unexhauſted ſtrength of the legions of Europe. Their ranks were broken, and, for a moment, Diocletian deſpaired of the purple and of life. But the advantage which Carinus had obtained by the valour of his ſoldiers, he quickly loſt by the infidelity of his officers. A tribune, whoſe wife he had ſeduced, ſeized the opportunity of revenge, and by a ſingle blow extinguiſhed civil diſcord in the blood of the adulterer [109].

[107] Vopiſcus in Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 252. The reaſon why Diocletian killed *Aper* (a wild boar), was founded on a prophecy and a pun, as fooliſh as they are well known.

[108] Eutropius marks its ſituation very accurately; it was between the Mons Aureus and Viminiacum. M. d'Anville (Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 304.) places Margus at Kaſtolatz in Servia, a little below Belgrade and Semendria.

[109] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 254. Eutropius, ix. 20. Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome.

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The Reign of Diocletian and his three Aſſociates, Maximian, Galerius, and Conſtantius.—General Re-eſtabliſhment of Order and Tranquillity.—The Perſian War, Victory, and Triumph.—The new Form of Adminiſtration.—Abdication and Retirement of Diocletian and Maximian.

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Elevation and character of Diocletian. A. D. 285.

AS the reign of Diocletian was more illuſtrious than that of any of his predeceſſors, ſo was his birth more abject and obſcure. The ſtrong claims of merit and of violence had frequently ſuperſeded the ideal prerogatives of nobility; but a diſtinct line of ſeparation was hitherto preſerved between the free and the ſervile part of mankind. The parents of Diocletian had been ſlaves in the houſe of Anulinus, a Roman ſenator; nor was he himſelf diſtinguiſhed by any other name, than that which he derived from a ſmall town in Dalmatia, from whence his mother deduced her origin [1]. It is, however, probable, that his father obtained the freedom of the family, and that he ſoon acquired an office of ſcribe, which was commonly exerciſed by perſons of his condition [2]. Favourable oracles, or rather the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior merit, prompted his aſpiring ſon to purſue the profeſſion of arms and the hopes of fortune; and it would be extremely curious to obſerve the gradation of arts

[1] Eutrop. ix. 19. Victor in Epitom. The town ſeems to have been properly called Doclia, from a ſmall tribe of Illyrians (ſee Cellarius, Geograph. Antiqua, tom. i. p. 393.); and the original name of the fortunate ſlave was probably Docles; he firſt lengthened it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majeſty of Diocletianus. He likewiſe aſſumed the Patrician name of Valerius, and it is uſually given him by Aurelius Victor.

[2] See Dacier on the ſixth ſatire of the ſecond book of Horace. Cornel. Nepos, in Vit. Eumen. c. 1.

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and accidents which enabled him in the end to fulfil thoſe oracles, and to diſplay that merit to the world. Diocletian was ſucceſſively promoted to the government of Mæſia, the honours of the conſulſhip, and the important command of the guards of the palace. He diſtinguiſhed his abilities in the Perſian war; and, after the death of Numerian, the ſlave, by the confeſſion and judgment of his rivals, was declared the moſt worthy of the Imperial throne. The malice of religious zeal, whilſt it arraigns the ſavage fierceneſs of his colleague Maximian, has affected to caſt ſuſpicions on the perſonal courage of the emperor Diocletian[3]. It would not be eaſy to perſuade us of the cowardice of a ſoldier of fortune, who acquired and preſerved the eſteem of the legions, as well as the favour of ſo many warlike princes. Yet even calumny is ſagacious enough to diſcover and to attack the moſt vulnerable part. The valour of Diocletian was never found inadequate to his duty or to the occaſion; but he appears not to have poſſeſſed the daring and generous ſpirit of a hero, who courts danger and fame, diſdains artifice, and boldly challenges the allegiance of his equals. His abilities were uſeful rather than ſplendid; a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and ſtudy of mankind; dexterity and application in buſineſs; a judicious mixture of liberality and œconomy, of mildneſs and rigour; profound diſſimulation under the diſguiſe of military frankneſs; ſteadineſs to purſue his ends; flexibility to vary his means; and above all, the great art of ſubmitting his own paſſions, as well as thoſe of others, to the intereſt of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition with the moſt ſpecious pretences of juſtice and public utility. Like Auguſtus, Diocletian may be conſidered as the founder of a new empire. Like the adopted ſon of Cæſar, he was diſtinguiſhed as a ſtateſman rather than as a warrior; nor did either of

[3] Lactantius (or whoever was the author of the little treatiſe De Mortibus Perſecutorum) accuſes Diocletian of *timidity* in two places, c. 7, 8. In Chap. 9, he ſays of him, "erat in omni tumultu meticuloſus et animi diſjectus."

thoſe

those princes employ force, whenever their purpose could be effected by policy.

His clemency and victory.

The victory of Diocletian was remarkable for its singular mildness. A people accustomed to applaud the clemency of the conqueror, if the usual punishments of death, exile, and confiscation were inflicted with any degree of temper and equity, beheld, with the most pleasing astonishment, a civil war, the flames of which were extinguished in the field of battle. Diocletian received into his confidence Aristobulus, the principal minister of the house of Carus, respected the lives, the fortunes, and the dignity of his adversaries, and even continued in their respective stations the greater number of the servants of Carinus[4]. It is not improbable that motives of prudence might assist the humanity of the artful Dalmatian; of these servants, many had purchased his favour by secret treachery; in others, he esteemed their grateful fidelity to an unfortunate master. The discerning judgment of Aurelian, of Probus, and of Carus, had filled the several departments of the state and army with officers of approved merit, whose removal would have injured the public service, without promoting the interest of the successor. Such a conduct, however, displayed to the Roman world the fairest prospect of the new reign, and the emperor affected to confirm this favourable prepossession, by declaring, that, among all the virtues of his predecessors, he was the most ambitious of imitating the humane philosophy of Marcus Antoninus[5].

Association and character of Maximian. A. D. 286. April 1.

The first considerable action of his reign seemed to evince his sincerity as well as his moderation. After the example of Marcus, he gave himself a colleague in the person of Maximian, on whom

[4] In this encomium, Aurelius Victor seems to convey a just, though indirect, censure of the cruelty of Constantius. It appears from the Fasti, that Aristobulus remained præfect of the city, and that he ended with Diocletian, the consulship which he had commenced with Carinus.

[5] Aurelius Victor styles Diocletian, "Parentem potius quam Dominum." See Hist. August. p. 30.

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he beſtowed at firſt the title of Cæſar, and afterwards that of Auguſtus[6]. But the motives of his conduct, as well as the object of his choice, were of a very different nature from thoſe of his admired predeceſſor. By inveſting a luxurious youth with the honours of the purple, Marcus had diſcharged a debt of private gratitude, at the expence, indeed, of the happineſs of the ſtate. By aſſociating a friend and a fellow-ſoldier to the labours of government, Diocletian, in a time of public danger, provided for the defence both of the Eaſt and of the Weſt. Maximian was born a peaſant, and, like Aurelian, in the territory of Sirmium. Ignorant of letters[7], careleſs of laws, the ruſticity of his appearance and manners ſtill betrayed in the moſt elevated fortune the meanneſs of his extraction. War was the only art which he profeſſed. In a long courſe of ſervice, he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf on every frontier of the empire; and though his military talents were formed to obey rather than to command, though, perhaps, he never attained the ſkill of a conſummate general, he was capable, by his valour, conſtancy, and experience, of executing the moſt arduous undertakings. Nor were the vices of Maximian leſs uſeful to his benefactor. Inſenſible to pity, and fearleſs of conſequences, he was the ready inſtrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once ſuggeſt and diſclaim. As ſoon as a bloody ſacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his ſeaſonable interceſſion, ſaved the remaining few whom he had never deſigned to puniſh, gently cenſured the ſeverity

[6] The queſtion of the time when Maximian received the honours of Cæſar and Auguſtus has divided modern critics, and given occaſion to a great deal of learned wrangling. I have followed M. de Tillemont (Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 500—505.), who has weighed the ſeveral reaſons and difficulties with his ſcrupulous accuracy.

[7] In an oration delivered before him (Panegyr. Vet. ii. 8.), Mamertinus expreſſes a doubt whether his hero, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. From thence we may fairly infer, that Maximian was more deſirous of being conſidered as a ſoldier than as a man of letters: and it is in this manner that we can often tranſlate the language of flattery into that of truth.

of

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of his ſtern colleague, and enjoyed the compariſon of a golden and an iron age, which was univerſally applied to their oppoſite maxims of government. Notwithſtanding the difference of their characters, the two emperors maintained, on the throne, that friendſhip which they had contracted in a private ſtation. The haughty turbulent ſpirit of Maximian, ſo fatal afterwards to himſelf and to the public peace, was accuſtomed to reſpect the genius of Diocletian, and confeſſed the aſcendant of reaſon over brutal violence[8]. From a motive either of pride or ſuperſtition, the two emperors aſſumed the titles, the one of Jovius, the other of Herculius. Whilſt the motion of the world (ſuch was the language of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-ſeeing wiſdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth from monſters and tyrants[9].

Aſſociation of two Cæſars, Galerius and Conſtantius. A. D. 292. March 1.

But even the omnipotence of Jovius and Herculius was inſufficient to ſuſtain the weight of the public adminiſtration. The prudence of Diocletian diſcovered, that the empire, aſſailed on every ſide by the barbarians, required on every ſide the preſence of a great army, and of an emperor. With this view he reſolved once more to divide his unwieldy power, and with the inferior title of *Cæſars*, to confer on two generals of approved merit an equal ſhare of the ſovereign authority[10]. Galerius, ſurnamed Armentarius, from his original profeſſion of a herdſman, and Conſtantius, who from his pale complexion had acquired the denomination of Chlorus[11], were the two perſons

[8] Lactantius de M. P. c. 8. Aurelius Victor. As among the Panegyrics, we find orations pronounced in praiſe of Maximian, and others which flatter his adverſaries at his expence, we derive ſome knowledge from the contraſt.

[9] See the ſecond and third Panegyrics, particularly iii. 3. 10. 14. but it would be tedious to copy the diffuſe and affected expreſſions of their falſe eloquence. With regard to the titles, conſult Aurel. Victor, Lactantius de M. P. c. 52. Spanheim de Uſu Numiſmatum, &c. Diſſertat. xii. 8.

[10] Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. Eutrop. ix. 22. Lactant. de M. P. c. 8. Hieronym. in Chron.

[11] It is only among the modern Greeks that Tillemont can diſcover his appellation of Chlorus. Any remarkable degree of paleneſs ſeems inconſiſtent with the *rubor* mentioned in Panegyric, v. 19.

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inveſted with the ſecond honours of the Imperial purple. In deſcribing the country, extraction, and manners of Herculius, we have already delineated thoſe of Galerius, who was often, and not improperly, ſtyled the younger Maximian, though, in many inſtances both of virtue and ability, he appears to have poſſeſſed a manifeſt ſuperiority over the elder. The birth of Conſtantius was leſs obſcure than that of his colleagues. Eutropius, his father, was one of the moſt conſiderable nobles of Dardania, and his mother was the niece of the emperor Claudius[12]. Although the youth of Conſtantius had been ſpent in arms, he was endowed with a mild and amiable diſpoſition, and the popular voice had long ſince acknowledged him worthy of the rank which he at laſt attained. To ſtrengthen the bonds of political, by thoſe of domeſtic union, each of the emperors aſſumed the character of a father to one of the Cæſars, Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Conſtantius; and each obliging them to repudiate their former wives, beſtowed his daughter in marriage on his adopted ſon[13]. Theſe four princes diſtributed among themſelves the wide extent of the Roman empire. The defence of Gaul, Spain[14], and Britain, was intruſted to Conſtantius: Galerius was ſtationed on the banks of the Danube, as the ſafeguard of the Illyrian provinces. Italy and Africa were conſidered as the department of Maximian; and for his peculiar portion, Diocletian reſerved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Aſia. Every one was ſovereign within his own juriſdiction; but their united authority extended over the whole monarchy; and each of them was prepared to aſſiſt his colleagues with his counſels or preſence. The Cæſars, in their exalted rank, revered

Departments and harmony of the four princes.

[12] Julian, the grandſon of Conſtantius, boaſts that his family was derived from the warlike Mæſians. Miſopogon, p. 348. The Dardanians dwelt on the edge of Mæſia.

[13] Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; if we ſpeak with ſtrictneſs, Theodora, the wife of Conſtantius, was daughter only to the wife of Maximian. Spanheim Diſſertat. xi. 2.

[14] This diviſion agrees with that of the four præfectures; yet there is ſome reaſon to doubt whether Spain was not a province of Maximian. See Tillemont, tom. iv. p. 517.

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the majeſty of the emperors, and the three younger princes invariably acknowledged, by their gratitude and obedience, the common parent of their fortunes. The ſuſpicious jealouſy of power found not any place among them; and the ſingular happineſs of their union has been compared to a chorus of muſic, whoſe harmony was regulated and maintained by the ſkilful hand of the firſt artiſt[15].

Series of events.

This important meaſure was not carried into execution till about ſix years after the aſſociation of Maximian, and that interval of time had not been deſtitute of memorable incidents. But we have preferred, for the ſake of perſpicuity, firſt to deſcribe the more perfect form of Diocletian's government, and afterwards to relate the actions of his reign, following rather the natural order of the events, than the dates of a very doubtful chronology.

A. D. 287. State of the peaſants of Gaul.

The firſt exploit of Maximian, though it is mentioned in a few words by our imperfect writers, deſerves, from its ſingularity, to be recorded in a hiſtory of human manners. He ſuppreſſed the peaſants of Gaul, who, under the appellation of Bagaudæ[16], had riſen in a general inſurrection; very ſimilar to thoſe, which in the fourteenth century ſucceſſively afflicted both France and England[17]. It ſhould ſeem, that very many of thoſe inſtitutions, referred by an eaſy ſolution to the feudal ſyſtem, are derived from the Celtic barbarians. When Cæſar ſubdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men; the clergy, the nobility, and the common people. The firſt governed by ſuperſtition, the ſecond by arms, but the third and laſt was not of any weight or account in their public councils. It was very natural for the Plebeians, oppreſſed by debt, or apprehenſive of injuries, to implore the

[15] Julian in Cæſarib. p. 315. Spanheim's notes to the French tranſlation, p. 122.

[16] The general name of *Bagaudæ* (in the ſignification of Rebels) continued till the fifth century in Gaul. Some critics derive it from a Celtic word *Bagad*, a tumultuous aſſembly. Scaliger ad Euſeb. Du Cange Gloſſar.

[17] Chronique de Froiſſart, vol. i. c. 182. ii. 73—79. The *naiveté* of his ſtory is loſt in our beſt modern writers.

protection

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protection of ſome powerful chief, who acquired over their perſons and property, the ſame abſolute rights as, among the Greeks and Romans, a maſter exerciſed over his ſlaves[18]. The greateſt part of the nation was gradually reduced into a ſtate of ſervitude; compelled to perpetual labour on the eſtates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the ſoil, either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no leſs cruel and forcible reſtraints of the laws. During the long ſeries of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian, the condition of theſe ſervile peaſants was peculiarly miſerable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their maſters, of the barbarians, of the ſoldiers, and of the officers of the revenue[19].

Their rebellion,

Their patience was at laſt provoked into deſpair. On every ſide they roſe in multitudes, armed with ruſtic weapons, and with irreſiſtible fury. The ploughman became a foot ſoldier, the ſhepherd mounted on horſeback, the deſerted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peaſants equalled thoſe of the fierceſt barbarians[20]. They aſſerted the natural rights of men, but they aſſerted thoſe rights with the moſt ſavage cruelty. The Gallic nobles juſtly dreading their revenge, either took refuge in the fortified cities, or fled from the wild ſcene of anarchy. The peaſants reigned without controul; and two of their moſt daring leaders had the folly and raſhneſs to aſſume the Imperial ornaments[21]. Their power ſoon expired at the approach of the legions. The ſtrength of union and diſcipline obtained an eaſy victory over a licentious and divided multitude[22]. A ſevere retaliation was inflicted on the peaſants who were found in arms:

and chaſtiſement.

[18] Cæſar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 13. Orgetorix, the Helvetian, could arm for his defence a body of ten thouſand ſlaves.

[19] Their oppreſſion and miſery are acknowledged by Eumenius (Panegyr. vi. 8.), Gallias efferatus injuriis.

[20] Panegyr. Vet. ii. 4. Aurelius Victor.

[21] Ælianus and Amandus. We have medals coined by them. Goltzius in Theſ. R. A. p. 117. 121.

[22] Levibus prœliis domuit. Eutrop. ix. 20.

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the affrighted remnant returned to their reſpective habitations, and their unſucceſsful effort for freedom ſerved only to confirm their ſlavery. So ſtrong and uniform is the current of popular paſſions, that we might almoſt venture, from very ſcanty materials, to relate the particulars of this war; but we are not diſpoſed to believe that the principal leaders Ælianus and Amandus were Chriſtians[23], or to inſinuate, that the rebellion, as it happened in the time of Luther, was occaſioned by the abuſe of thoſe benevolent principles of Chriſtianity, which inculcate the natural freedom of mankind.

A. D. 287. Revolt of Carauſius in Britain.

Maximian had no ſooner recovered Gaul from the hands of the peaſants, than he loſt Britain by the uſurpation of Carauſius. Ever ſince the raſh but ſucceſsful enterpriſe of the Franks under the reign of Probus, their daring countrymen had conſtructed ſquadrons of light brigantines, in which they inceſſantly ravaged the provinces adjacent to the ocean[24]. To repel their deſultory incurſions, it was found neceſſary to create a naval power; and the judicious meaſure was proſecuted with prudence and vigour. Geſſoriacum, or Boulogne, in the ſtraights of the Britiſh channel, was choſen by the emperor for the ſtation of the Roman fleet; and the command of it was intruſted to Carauſius, a Menapian of the meaneſt origin[25], but who had long ſignaliſed his ſkill as a pilot, and his valour as a ſoldier. The integrity of the new admiral correſponded not with his abilities. When the German pirates ſailed from their own harbours, he connived at their paſſage, but

[23] The fact reſts indeed on very ſlight authority, a life of St. Babolinus, which is probably of the ſeventh century. See Ducheſne Scriptores Rer. Francicar. tom. i. p. 662.

[24] Aurelius Victor calls them Germans. Eutropius (ix. 21.) gives them the name of Saxons. But Eutropius lived in the enſuing century, and ſeems to uſe the language of his own times.

[25] The three expreſſions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Eumenius "viliſſime natus," "Bataviæ alumnus," and "Menapiæ civis," give us a very doubtful account of the birth of Carauſius. Dr. Stukely, however, (Hiſt. of Carauſius, p. 62.) chuſes to make him a native of St. David's, and a prince of the blood royal of Britain. The former idea he had found in Richard of Cirenceſter, p. 44.

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he diligently intercepted their return, and appropriated to his own uſe an ample ſhare of the ſpoil which they had acquired. The wealth of Carauſius was, on this occaſion, very juſtly conſidered as an evidence of his guilt; and Maximian had already given orders for his death. But the crafty Menapian foreſaw and prevented the ſeverity of the emperor. By his liberality he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded, and ſecured the barbarians in his intereſt. From the port of Boulogne he ſailed over to Britain, perſuaded the legion, and the auxiliaries which guarded that Iſland, to embrace his party, and boldly aſſuming, with the Imperial purple, the title of Auguſtus, defied the juſtice and the arms of his injured ſovereign[26].

Importance of Britain.

When Britain was thus diſmembered from the empire, its importance was ſenſibly felt, and its loſs ſincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and perhaps magnified, the extent of that noble iſland, provided on every ſide with convenient harbours; the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the ſoil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich paſtures covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods free from wild beaſts or venomous ſerpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilſt they confeſſed, that ſuch a province well deſerved to become the ſeat of an independent monarchy[27]. During the ſpace of ſeven years, it was poſſeſſed by Carauſius; and fortune continued propitious to a rebellion, ſupported with courage and ability. The Britiſh emperor defended the frontiers of his dominions againſt

Power of Carauſius,

[26] Panegyr. v. 12. Britain at this time was ſecure, and ſlightly guarded.

[27] Panegyr. Vet. v. 11. vii. 9. The orator Eumenius wiſhed to exalt the glory of the hero (Conſtantius), with the importance of the conqueſt. Notwithſtanding our laudable partiality for our native country, it is difficult to conceive, that, in the beginning of the fourth century, England deſerved *all* theſe commendations. A century and half before, it hardly paid its own eſtabliſhment. See Appian in Proœm.

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the Caledonians of the North, invited, from the continent, a great number of ſkilful artiſts, and diſplayed, on a variety of coins that are ſtill extant, his taſte and opulence. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendſhip of that formidable people, by the flattering imitation of their dreſs and manners. The braveſt of their youth he enliſted among his land or ſea forces; and in return for their uſeful alliance, he communicated to the barbarians the dangerous knowledge of military and naval arts. Carauſius ſtill preſerved the poſſeſſion of Boulogne and the adjacent country. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coaſts of the ocean, and diffuſed beyond the columns of Hercules the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, deſtined in a future age to obtain the empire of the ſea, already aſſumed its natural and reſpectable ſtation of a maritime power[28].

A. D. 289. acknowledged by the other emperors.

By ſeizing the fleet of Boulogne, Carauſius had deprived his maſter of the means of purſuit and revenge. And when, after a vaſt expence of time and labour, a new armament was launched into the water[29], the Imperial troops, unaccuſtomed to that element, were eaſily baffled and defeated by the veteran ſailors of the uſurper. This diſappointed effort was ſoon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocletian and his colleague, who juſtly dreaded the enterpriſing ſpirit of Carauſius, reſigned to him the ſovereignty of Britain, and reluctantly admitted their perfidious ſervant to a participation of the Imperial honours[30]. But the adoption of the

[28] As a great number of medals of Carauſius are ſtill preſerved, he is become a very favourite object of antiquarian curioſity, and every circumſtance of his life and actions has been inveſtigated with ſagacious accuracy. Dr. Stukely in particular has devoted a large volume to the Britiſh emperor. I have uſed his materials, and rejected moſt of his fanciful conjectures.

[29] When Mamertinus pronounced his firſt panegyric, the naval preparations of Maximian were completed: and the orator preſaged an aſſured victory. His ſilence in the ſecond Panegyric, might alone inform us, that the expedition had not ſucceeded.

[30] Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the medals (Pax Auggg.) inform us of this temporary reconciliation: though I will not preſume (as Dr. Stukely has done, Medallic Hiſtory of Carauſius, p. 86, &c.) to inſert the identical articles of the treaty.

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two Cæſars reſtored new vigour to the Roman arms; and while the Rhine was guarded by the preſence of Maximian, his brave aſſociate Conſtantius aſſumed the conduct of the Britiſh war. His firſt enterpriſe was againſt the important place of Boulogne. A ſtupendous mole, raiſed acroſs the entrance of the harbour, intercepted all hopes of relief. The town ſurrendered after an obſtinate defence; and a conſiderable part of the naval ſtrength of Carauſius fell into the hands of the beſiegers. During the three years which Conſtantius employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conqueſt of Britain, he ſecured the coaſt of Gaul, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the uſurper of the aſſiſtance of thoſe powerful allies.

A. D. 292.

A. D. 294. His death.

Before the preparations were finiſhed, Conſtantius received the intelligence of the tyrant's death, and it was conſidered as a ſure preſage of the approaching victory. The ſervants of Carauſius imitated the example of treaſon, which he had given. He was murdered by his firſt miniſter Allectus, and the aſſaſſin ſucceeded to his power and to his danger. But he poſſeſſed not equal abilities either to exerciſe the one, or to repel the other. He beheld, with anxious terror, the oppoſite ſhores of the continent, already filled with arms, with troops, and with veſſels; for Conſtantius had very prudently divided his forces, that he might likewiſe divide the attention and reſiſtance of the enemy. The attack was at length made by the principal ſquadron, which, under the command of the præfect Aſclepiodatus, an officer of diſtinguiſhed merit, had been aſſembled in the mouth of the Seine. So imperfect in thoſe times was the art of navigation, that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to ſet ſail with a ſide-wind, and on a ſtormy day. The weather proved favourable to their enterpriſe. Under the cover of a thick fog, they eſcaped the fleet of Allectus, which had been ſtationed off the Iſle of Wight to receive them, landed in ſafety on ſome part of the weſtern coaſt; and

A. D. 296. Recovery of Britain by Conſtantius.

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and convinced the Britons, that a ſuperiority of naval ſtrength will not always protect their country from a foreign invaſion. Aſclepiodatus had no ſooner diſembarked the Imperial troops, than he ſet fire to his ſhips; and, as the expedition proved fortunate, his heroic conduct was univerſally admired. The uſurper had poſted himſelf near London, to expect the formidable attack of Conſtantius, who commanded in perſon the fleet of Boulogne; but the deſcent of a new enemy required his immediate preſence in the Weſt. He performed this long march in ſo precipitate a manner, that he encountered the whole force of the præfect with a ſmall body of haraſſed and diſheartened troops. The engagement was ſoon terminated by the total defeat and death of Allectus; a ſingle battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great iſland; and when Conſtantius landed on the ſhores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient ſubjects. Their acclamations were loud and unanimous; and the virtues of the conqueror may induce us to believe, that they ſincerely rejoiced in a revolution, which, after a ſeparation of ten years, reſtored Britain to the body of the Roman empire[31].

Defence of the frontiers.

Britain had none but domeſtic enemies to dread; and as long as the governors preſerved their fidelity, and the troops their diſcipline, the incurſions of the naked ſavages of Scotland or Ireland could never materially affect the ſafety of the province. The peace of the continent, and the defence of the principal rivers which bounded the empire, were objects of far greater difficulty and importance. The policy of Diocletian, which inſpired the councils of his aſſociates, provided for the public tranquillity, by encouraging a ſpirit of diſſention among the barbarians, and by ſtrengthening the fortifications of the Roman limit. In the Eaſt he fixed a line of camps of Egypt to

Fortifications.

[31] With regard to the recovery of Britain, we obtain a few hints from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius.

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the Perſian dominions, and, for every camp, he inſtituted an adequate number of ſtationary troops, commanded by their reſpective officers, and ſupplied with every kind of arms, from the new arſenals which he had formed at Antioch, Emeſa, and Damaſcus[32]. Nor was the precaution of the emperor leſs watchful againſt the well-known valour of the barbarians of Europe. From the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the ancient camps, towns, and citadels, were diligently re-eſtabliſhed, and, in the moſt expoſed places, new ones were ſkilfully conſtructed; the ſtricteſt vigilance was introduced among the garriſons of the frontier, and every expedient was practiſed that could render the long chain of fortifications firm and impenetrable[33]. A barrier ſo reſpectable was ſeldom violated, and the barbarians often turned againſt each other their diſappointed rage. The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Alemanni, waſted each others ſtrength by deſtructive hoſtilities, and whoſoever vanquiſhed, they vanquiſhed the enemies of Rome. The ſubjects of Diocletian enjoyed the bloody ſpectacle, and congratulated each other, that the miſchiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians[34].

Diſſentions of the barbarians.

Notwithſtanding the policy of Diocletian, it was impoſſible to maintain an equal and undiſturbed tranquillity during a reign of twenty years, and along a frontier of many hundred miles. Sometimes the barbarians ſuſpended their domeſtic animoſities, and the relaxed vigilance of the garriſons ſometimes gave a paſſage to their ſtrength or dexterity. Whenever the provinces were invaded, Diocletian conducted himſelf with that calm dignity which he always

Conduct of the emperors.

[32] John Malela, in Chron. Antiochen, tom. i. p. 408, 409.

[33] Zoſim. l. i. p. 3. That partial hiſtorian ſeems to celebrate the vigilance of Diocletian, with a deſign of expoſing the negligence of Conſtantine; we may, however, liſten to an orator, "Nam quid ego alarum et cohortium caſtra percenſeam, toto Rheni et Iſtri et Euphratis limite reſtituta." Panegyr. Vet. iv. 18.

[34] Ruunt omnes in ſanguinem ſuum populi, quibus non contigit eſſe Romanis, obſtinatæque feritatis pœnas nunc ſponte perſolvunt. Panegyr. Vet. iii. 16. Mamertinus illuſtrates the fact, by the example of almoſt all the nations of the world.

affected

affected or poſſeſſed; reſerved his preſence for ſuch occaſions as were worthy of his interpoſition, never expoſed his perſon or reputation to any unneceſſary danger, enſured his ſucceſs by every means that prudence could ſuggeſt, and diſplayed, with oſtentation, the conſequences of his victory. In wars of a more difficult nature, and more doubtful event, he employed the rough valour of Maximian, and that faithful ſoldier was content to aſcribe his own victories to the wiſe counſels and auſpicious influence of his benefactor. But after the adoption of the two Cæſars, the emperors themſelves retiring to a leſs laborious ſcene of action, devolved on their adopted ſons the defence of the Danube and of the Rhine. The vigilant Galerius was never reduced to the neceſſity of vanquiſhing an army of barbarians on the Roman territory[35]. The brave and active Conſtantius delivered Gaul from a very furious inroad of the Alemanni; and his victories of Langres and Vindoniſſa appear to have been actions of conſiderable danger and merit. As he traverſed the open country with a feeble guard, he was encompaſſed on a ſudden by the ſuperior multitude of the enemy. He retreated with difficulty towards Langres; but, in the general conſternation, the citizens refuſed to open their gates, and the wounded prince was drawn up the wall by the means of a rope. But on the news of his diſtreſs, the Roman troops haſtened from all ſides to his relief, and before the evening he had ſatisfied his honour and revenge by the ſlaughter of ſix thouſand Alemanni[36]. From the monuments of thoſe times, the obſcure traces of ſeveral other victories over the barbarians of Sarmatia and Germany might poſſibly be collected; but the tedious ſearch would not be rewarded either with amuſement or with inſtruction.

Valour of the Cæſars.

[35] He complained, though not with the ſtricteſt truth; "Jam fluxiſſe annos quindecim in quibus, in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relegatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaret." Lactant. de M. P. c. 18.

[36] In the Greek text of Euſebius, we read ſix thouſand, a number which I have preferred to the ſixty thouſand of Jerome, Oroſius, Eutropius, and his Greek tranſlator Pæanius.

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Treatment of the barbarians.

The conduct which the emperor Probus had adopted in the diſpoſal of the vanquiſhed, was imitated by Diocletian and his aſſociates. The captive barbarians, exchanging death for ſlavery, were diſtributed among the provincials, and aſſigned to thoſe diſtricts (in Gaul, the territories of Amiens, Beauvais, Cambray, Treves, Langres, and Troyes, are particularly ſpecified[37]) which had been depopulated by the calamities of war. They were uſefully employed as ſhepherds and huſbandmen, but were denied the exerciſe of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol them in the military ſervice. Nor did the emperors refuſe the property of lands, with a leſs ſervile tenure, to ſuch of the barbarians as ſolicited the protection of Rome. They granted a ſettlement to ſeveral colonies of the Carpi, the Baſtarnæ, and the Sarmatians; and, by a dangerous indulgence, permitted them in ſome meaſure to retain their national manners and independence[38]. Among the provincials, it was a ſubject of flattering exultation, that the barbarian, ſo lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty. They congratulated their maſters on the powerful acceſſion of ſubjects and ſoldiers; but they forgot to obſerve, that multitudes of ſecret enemies, inſolent from favour, or deſperate from oppreſſion, were introduced into the heart of the empire[39].

Wars of Africa and Egypt.

While the Cæſars exerciſed their valour on the banks of the Rhine and Danube, the preſence of the emperors was required on the ſouthern confines of the Roman world. From the Nile to mount Atlas, Africa was in arms. A confederacy of five Mooriſh nations

[37] Panegyr. Vet. vii. 21.

[38] There was a ſettlement of the Sarmatians in the neighbourhood of Treves, which ſeems to have been deſerted by thoſe lazy Barbarians: Auſonius ſpeaks of them in his Moſelle.

Unde iter ingrediens nemoroſa per avia ſolum,
Et nulla humani ſpectans veſtigia cultus
- - - - - - - - - - - - -
Arvaque Sauromatûm nuper metata colonis.

There was a town of the Carpi in the Lower Mæſia.

[39] See the rhetorical exultation of Eumenius. Panegyr. vii. 9.

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iſſued from their deſerts to invade the peaceful provinces[40]. Julian had aſſumed the purple at Carthage[41]. Achilleus at Alexandria, and even the Blemmyes, renewed, or rather continued, their incurſions into the Upper Egypt. Scarcely any circumſtances have been preſerved of the exploits of Maximian in the weſtern parts of Africa; but it appears by the event, that the progreſs of his arms was rapid and deciſive, that he vanquiſhed the fierceſt barbarians of Mauritania, and that he removed them from the mountains, whoſe inacceſſible ſtrength had inſpired their inhabitants with a lawleſs confidence, and habituated them to a life of rapine and violence[42]. Diocletian, on his ſide, opened the campaign in Egypt by the ſiege of Alexandria, cut off the aqueducts which conveyed the waters of the Nile into every quarter of that immenſe city[43], and rendering his camp impregnable to the ſallies of the beſieged multitude, he puſhed his reiterated attacks with caution and vigour. After a ſiege of eight months, Alexandria, waſted by the ſword and by fire, implored the clemency of the conqueror; but it experienced the full extent of his ſeverity. Many thouſands of the citizens periſhed in a promiſcuous ſlaughter, and there were few obnoxious perſons in Egypt who eſcaped a ſentence either of death, or at leaſt of exile[44]. The fate of Euſiris and of Coptos was ſtill more melancholy than that of Alexandria; thoſe proud cities, the former diſtinguiſhed by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the paſſage of the Indian trade, were utterly deſtroyed by the arms and by the

A. D. 296. Conduct of Diocletian in Egypt.

[40] Scaliger (Animadverſ. ad Euſeb. p. 243.) decides in his uſual manner, that the Quinque gentiani, or five African nations, were the five great cities, the Pentapolis of the inoffenſive province of Cyrene.

[41] After his defeat, Julian ſtabbed himſelf with a dagger, and immediately leaped into the flames. Victor in Epitome.

[42] Tu ferociſſimos Mauritaniæ populos inacceſſis montium jugis et naturali munitione fidentes, expugnaſti, recipiſti, tranſtuliſti. Panegyr. Vet. vi. 8.

[43] See the deſcription of Alexandria, in Hirtius de Bel. Alexandrin. c. 5.

[44] Eutrop. ix. 24. Oroſius, vii. 25. John Malela in Chron. Antioch. p. 409, 410. Yet Eumenius aſſures us, that Egypt was pacified by the clemency of Diocletian.

ſevere

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ſevere order of Diocletian[45]. The character of the Egyptian nation, inſenſible to kindneſs, but extremely ſuſceptible of fear, could alone juſtify this exceſſive rigour. The ſeditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and ſubſiſtence of Rome itſelf. Since the uſurpation of Firmus, the province of Upper Egypt, inceſſantly relapſing into rebellion, had embraced the alliance of the ſavages of Æthiopia. The number of the Blemmyes, ſcattered between the iſland of Meroe and the Red Sea, was very inconſiderable, their diſpoſition was unwarlike, their weapons rude and inoffenſive[46]. Yet in the public diſorders theſe barbarians, whom antiquity, ſhocked with the deformity of their figure, had almoſt excluded from the human ſpecies, preſumed to rank themſelves among the enemies of Rome[47]. Such had been the unworthy allies of the Egyptians; and while the attention of the ſtate was engaged in more ſerious wars, their vexatious inroads might again haraſs the repoſe of the province. With a view of oppoſing to the Blemmyes a ſuitable adverſary, Diocletian perſuaded the Nobatæ, or people of Nubia, to remove from their ancient habitations in the deſerts of Lybia, and reſigned to them an extenſive but unprofitable territory above Syene and the cataracts of the Nile, with the ſtipulation, that they ſhould ever reſpect and guard the frontier of the empire. The treaty long ſubſiſted; and till the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity introduced ſtricter notions of religious worſhip, it was annually ratified by a ſolemn ſacrifice in the iſle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the ſame viſible or inviſible powers of the univerſe[48].

[45] Euſebius (in Chron.) places their deſtruction ſeveral years ſooner, and at a time when Egypt itſelf was in a ſtate of rebellion againſt the Romans.

[46] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 1. 172. Pomponius Mela, l. i. c. 4. His words are curious, "Intra, ſi credere libet, vix homines magiſque ſemiferi; Ægipanes, et *Blemmyes*, et Satyri."

[47] Auſus ſeſe inſerere fortunæ et provocare arma Romana.

[48] See Procopius de Bell. Perſic. l. i. c. 19.

At

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At the ſame time that Diocletian chaſtiſed the paſt crimes of the Egyptians, he provided for their future ſafety and happineſs by many wiſe regulations which were confirmed and enforced under the ſucceeding reigns[49]. One very remarkable edict, which he publiſhed, inſtead of being condemned as the effect of jealous tyranny, deſerves to be applauded as an act of prudence and humanity. He cauſed a diligent inquiry to be made "for all the ancient books "which treated of the admirable art of making gold and ſilver, "and without pity committed them to the flames; apprehenſive, "as we are aſſured, leſt the opulence of the Egyptians ſhould in-"ſpire them with confidence to rebel againſt the empire[50]." But if Diocletian had been convinced of the reality of that valuable art, far from extinguiſhing the memory, he would have converted the operation of it to the benefit of the public revenue. It is much more likely, that his good ſenſe diſcovered to him the folly of ſuch magnificent pretenſions, and that he was deſirous of preſerving the reaſon and fortunes of his ſubjects from the miſchievous purſuit. It may be remarked, that theſe ancient books, ſo liberally aſcribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the uſe or to the abuſe of chymiſtry. In that immenſe regiſter, where Pliny has depoſited the diſcoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the leaſt mention of the tranſmutation of metals; and the perſecution of Diocletian is the firſt authentic event in the hiſtory of alchymy. The conqueſt of Egypt by the Arabs diffuſed that vain ſcience over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was ſtudied in China as in Europe, with equal eagerneſs, and with equal ſucceſs. The darkneſs of the middle ages

He ſuppreſſes books of alchymy.

Novelty and progreſs of that art.

[49] He fixed the public allowance of corn for the people of Alexandria, at two millions of *medimni*; about four hundred thouſand quarters. Chron. Paſchal. p. 276. Procop. Hiſt. Arcan. c. 26.

[50] John Antioch in Excerp. Valeſian. p. 834. Suidas in Diocletian.

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ages enſured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder, and the revival of learning gave new vigour to hope, and ſuggeſted more ſpecious arts of deception. Philoſophy, with the aid of experience, has at length baniſhed the ſtudy of alchymy; and the preſent age, however deſirous of riches, is content to ſeek them by the humbler means of commerce and induſtry [51].

The Perſian war.

The reduction of Egypt was immediately followed by the Perſian war. It was reſerved for the reign of Diocletian to vanquiſh that powerful nation, and to extort a confeſſion from the ſucceſſors of Artaxerxes, of the ſuperior majeſty of the Roman empire.

Tiridates the Armenian.

We have obſerved under the reign of Valerian, that Armenia was ſubdued by the perfidy and the arms of the Perſians, and that, after the aſſaſſination of Choſroes, his ſon Tiridates, the infant heir of the monarchy, was ſaved by the fidelity of his friends, and educated under the protection of the emperors. Tiridates derived from his exile ſuch advantages as he could never have obtained on the throne of Armenia; the early knowledge of adverſity, of mankind, and of the Roman diſcipline. He ſignalized his youth by deeds of valour, and diſplayed a matchleſs dexterity, as well as ſtrength, in every martial exerciſe, and even in the leſs honourable

A. D. 282. conteſts of the Olympian games [52]. Thoſe qualities were more nobly exerted in the defence of his benefactor Licinius [53]. That officer, in the ſedition which occaſioned the death of Probus, was expoſed to the moſt imminent danger, and the enraged ſoldiers were

[51] See a ſhort hiſtory and confutation of Alchymy, in the works of that philoſophical compiler, La Mothe le Vayer, tom. i. p. 327—353.

[52] See the education and ſtrength of Tiridates in the Armenian hiſtory of Moſes of Chorene, l. ii. c. 76. He could ſeize two wild bulls by the horns, and break them off with his hands.

[53] If we give credit to the younger Victor, who ſuppoſes that in the year 323, Licinius was only ſixty years of age, he could ſcarcely be the ſame perſon as the patron of Tiridates; but we know from much better authority (Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. x. c. 8.), that Licinius was at that time in the laſt period of old age: ſixteen years before, he is repreſented with grey hairs, and as the contemporary of Galerius. See Lactant. c. 32. Licinius was probably born about the year 250.

forcing their way into his tent, when they were checked by the ſingle arm of the Armenian prince. The gratitude of Tiridates contributed ſoon afterwards to his reſtoration. Licinius was in every ſtation the friend and companion of Galerius, and the merit of Galerius, long before he was raiſed to the dignity of Cæſar, had been known and eſteemed by Diocletian. In the third year of that emperor's reign, Tiridates was inveſted with the kingdom of Armenia. The juſtice of the meaſure was not leſs evident than its expediency. It was time to reſcue from the uſurpation of the Perſian monarch an important territory, which, ſince the reign of Nero, had been always granted under the protection of the empire to a younger branch of the houſe of Arſaces [54].

A. D. 286. His reſtoration to the throne of Armenia.

When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia, he was received with an unfeigned tranſport of joy and loyalty. During twenty-ſix years, the country had experienced the real and imaginary hardſhips of a foreign yoke. The Perſian monarchs adorned their new conqueſt with magnificent buildings; but thoſe monuments had been erected at the expence of the people, and were abhorred as badges of ſlavery. The apprehenſion of a revolt had inſpired the moſt rigorous precautions: oppreſſion had been aggravated by inſult, and the conſciouſneſs of the public hatred had been productive of every meaſure that could render it ſtill more implacable. We have already remarked the intolerant ſpirit of the Magian religion. The ſtatues of the deified kings of Armenia, and the ſacred images of the ſun and moon, were broke in pieces by the zeal of the conqueror; and the perpetual fire of Ormuzd was kindled and preſerved upon an altar erected on the ſummit of mount Bagavan [55]. It

State of the country.

[54] See the ſixty-ſecond and ſixty-third books of Dion Caſſius.

[55] Moſes of Chorene, Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 74. The ſtatues had been erected by Valarſaces, who reigned in Armenia about 130 years before Chriſt, and was the firſt king of the family of Arſaces (ſee Moſes Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. 2, 3.). The deification of the Arſacides is mentioned by Juſtin (xli. 5.) and by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6.).

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Revolt of the people and nobles.

was natural, that a people exaſperated by ſo many injuries, ſhould arm with zeal in the cauſe of their independence, their religion, and their hereditary ſovereign. The torrent bore down every obſtacle, and the Perſian garriſons retreated before its fury. The nobles of Armenia flew to the ſtandard of Tiridates, all alleging their paſt merit, offering their future ſervice, and ſoliciting from the new king thoſe honours and rewards from which they had been excluded with diſdain under the foreign government [56]. The command of the army was beſtowed on Artavaſdes, whoſe father had ſaved the infancy of Tiridates, and whoſe family had been maſſacred for that generous action. The brother of Artavaſdes obtained the government of a province. One of the firſt military dignities was conferred on the ſatrap Otas, a man of ſingular temperance and fortitude, who preſented to the king, his ſiſter [57] and a conſiderable treaſure, both of which, in a ſequeſtered fortreſs, Otas had preſerved from violation.

Story of Mamgo.

Among the Armenian nobles appeared an ally, whoſe fortunes are too remarkable to paſs unnoticed. His name was Mamgo, his origin was Scythian, and the horde which acknowledged his authority, had encamped a very few years before on the ſkirts of the Chineſe empire [58], which at that time extended as far as the neighbourhood of Sogdiana [59]. Having incurred the diſpleaſure of his maſter,

[56] The Armenian nobility was numerous and powerful. Moſes mentions many families which were diſtinguiſhed under the reign of Valarſaces (l. ii. 7.), and which ſtill ſubſiſted in his own time, about the middle of the fifth century. See the preface of his Editors.

[57] She was named Choſroiduchta, and had not the *os patulum* like other women. (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 79.) I do not underſtand the expreſſion.

[58] In the Armenian Hiſtory (l. ii. 78.), as well as in the Geography (p. 367.), China is called Zenia, or Zenaſtan. It is characterized by the production of ſilk, by the opulence of the natives, and by their love of peace, above all the other nations of the earth.

[59] Vou-ti, the firſt emperor of the ſeventh dynaſty, who then reigned in China, had political tranſactions with Fergana, a province of Sogdiana, and is ſaid to have received a Roman embaſſy (Hiſtoire des Huns, tom. i. p. 38.). In thoſe ages the Chineſe kept a garriſon at Kaſhgar, and one of their generals, about the time of Trajan, marched as far as the Caſpian ſea. With regard to the intercourſe between China and the weſtern countries, a curious memoir of M. de Guignes may be conſulted, in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxxii. p. 355.

Mamgo,

Mamgo, with his followers, retired to the banks of the Oxus, and implored the protection of Sapor. The emperor of China claimed the fugitive, and alleged the rights of ſovereignty. The Perſian monarch pleaded the laws of hoſpitality, and with ſome difficulty avoided a war, by the promiſe that he would baniſh Mamgo to the uttermoſt parts of the Weſt; a puniſhment, as he deſcribed it, not leſs dreadful than death itſelf. Armenia was choſen for the place of exile, and a large diſtrict was aſſigned to the Scythian horde, on which they might feed their flocks and herds, and remove their encampment from one place to another, according to the different ſeaſons of the year. They were employed to repel the invaſion of Tiridates; but their leader, after weighing the obligations and injuries which he had received from the Perſian monarch, reſolved to abandon his party. The Armenian prince, who was well acquainted with the merit as well as power of Mamgo, treated him with diſtinguiſhed reſpect; and by admitting him into his confidence, acquired a brave and faithful ſervant, who contributed very effectually to his reſtoration [60].

The Perſians recover Armenia.

For a while, fortune appeared to favour the enterpriſing valour of Tiridates. He not only expelled the enemies of his family and country from the whole extent of Armenia, but in the proſecution of his revenge he carried his arms, or at leaſt his incurſions, into the heart of Aſſyria. The hiſtorian, who has preſerved the name of Tiridates from oblivion, celebrates, with a degree of national enthuſiaſm, his perſonal proweſs; and, in the true ſpirit of eaſtern romance, deſcribes the giants and the elephants that fell beneath his invincible arm. It is from other information that we diſcover the diſtracted ſtate of the Perſian monarchy, to which the king of Armenia was indebted for ſome part of his advantages. The throne was diſputed by the ambition of contending brothers; and Hormuz, after exerting without

[60] See Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 81.

ſucceſs

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ſucceſs the ſtrength of his own party, had recourſe to the dangerous aſſiſtance of the barbarians who inhabited the banks of the Caſpian Sea[61]. The civil war was, however, ſoon terminated, either by a victory, or by a reconciliation; and Narſes, who was univerſally acknowledged as king of Perſia, directed his whole force againſt the foreign enemy. The conteſt then became too unequal; nor was the valour of the hero able to withſtand the power of the monarch. Tiridates, a ſecond time expelled from the throne of Armenia, once more took refuge in the court of the emperors. Narſes ſoon re-eſtabliſhed his authority over the revolted province; and loudly complaining of the protection afforded by the Romans to rebels and fugitives, aſpired to the conqueſt of the Eaſt[62].

War between the Perſians and the Romans. A. D. 296.

Neither prudence nor honour could permit the emperors to forſake the cauſe of the Armenian king, and it was reſolved to exert the force of the empire in the Perſian war. Diocletian, with the calm dignity which he conſtantly aſſumed, fixed his own ſtation in the city of Antioch, from whence he prepared and directed the military operations[63]. The conduct of the legions was intruſted to the intrepid valour of Galerius, who, for that important purpoſe, was removed from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Euphrates.

Defeat of Galerius.

The armies ſoon encountered each other in the plains of Meſopotamia, and two battles were fought with various and doubtful ſucceſs: but the third engagement was of a more deciſive nature; and

[61] Ipſos Perſas ipſumque Regem aſcitis Saccis, et Ruffis, et Gellis, petit frater Ormies. Panegyric. Vet. iii. 1. The Saccæ were a nation of wandering Scythians, who encamped towards the ſources of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Gelli were the inhabitants of Ghilan along the Caſpian ſea, and who ſo long, under the name of Dilemites, infeſted the Perſian monarchy. See d'Herbelot, Bibliothéque Orientale.

[62] Moſes of Chorene takes no notice of this ſecond revolution, which I have been obliged to collect from a paſſage of Ammianus Marcellinus (l. xxiii. 5.). Lactantius ſpeaks of the ambition of Narſes, "Concitatus domeſticis exemplis avi ſui Saporis ad occupandum orientem magnis copiis inhiabat." De Mort. Perſecut. c. 9.

[63] We may readily believe, that Lactantius aſcribes to cowardice the conduct of Diocletian. Julian, in his oration, ſays, that he remained with all the forces of the empire; a very hyperbolical expreſſion.

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the Roman army received a total overthrow, which is attributed to the raſhneſs of Galerius, who, with an inconſiderable body of troops, attacked the innumerable hoſt of the Perſians[64]. But the conſideration of the country that was the ſcene of action, may ſuggeſt another reaſon for his defeat. The ſame ground on which Galerius was vanquiſhed, had been rendered memorable by the death of Craſſus, and the ſlaughter of ten legions. It was a plain of more than ſixty miles, which extended from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a ſmooth and barren ſurface of ſandy deſert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a ſpring of freſh water[65]. The ſteady infantry of the Romans, fainting with heat and thirſt, could neither hope for victory if they preſerved their ranks, nor break their ranks without expoſing themſelves to the moſt imminent danger. In this ſituation they were gradually encompaſſed by the ſuperior numbers, haraſſed by the rapid evolutions, and deſtroyed by the arrows of the barbarian cavalry. The king of Armenia had ſignalized his valour in the battle, and acquired perſonal glory by the public misfortune. He was purſued as far as the Euphrates; his horſe was wounded, and it appeared impoſſible for him to eſcape the victorious enemy. In this extremity Tiridates embraced the only refuge which he ſaw before him: he diſmounted and plunged into the ſtream. His armour was heavy, the river very deep, and at thoſe parts at leaſt half a mile in breadth[66]; yet ſuch was his ſtrength and dexterity, that he reached in ſafety the oppoſite bank[67]. With regard to the Roman general, we are ignorant of the circumſtances of his eſcape; but when

[64] Our five abbreviators, Eutropius, Feſtus, the two Victors, and Oroſius, all relate the laſt and great battle; but Oroſius is the only one who ſpeaks of the two former.

[65] The nature of the country is finely deſcribed by Plutarch, in the life of Craſſus, and by Xenophon, in the firſt book of the Anabaſis.

[66] See Foſter's Diſſertation in the ſecond volume of the tranſlation of the Anabaſis by Spelman; which I will venture to recommend as one of the beſt verſions extant.

[67] Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 76. I have tranſferred this exploit of Tiridates from an imaginary defeat to the real one of Galerius.

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His reception by Diocletian.

he returned to Antioch, Diocletian received him, not with the tenderneſs of a friend and colleague, but with the indignation of an offended ſovereign. The haughtieſt of men, clothed in his purple, but humbled by the ſenſe of his fault and misfortune, was obliged to follow the emperor's chariot above a mile on foot, and to exhibit, before the whole court, the ſpectacle of his diſgrace [68].

Second campaign of Galerius. A. D. 297.

As ſoon as Diocletian had indulged his private reſentment, and aſſerted the majeſty of ſupreme power, he yielded to the ſubmiſſive entreaties of the Cæſar, and permitted him to retrieve his own honour as well as that of the Roman arms. In the room of the unwarlike troops of Aſia, which had moſt probably ſerved in the firſt expedition, a ſecond army was drawn from the veterans and new levies of the Illyrian frontier, and a conſiderable body of Gothic auxiliaries were taken into the Imperial pay [69]. At the head of a choſen army of twenty-five thouſand men, Galerius again paſſed the Euphrates; but, inſtead of expoſing his legions in the open plains of Meſopotamia, he advanced through the mountains of Armenia, where he found the inhabitants devoted to his cauſe, and the country as favourable to the operations of infantry, as it was inconvenient for the motions of cavalry [70]. Adverſity had confirmed the Roman diſcipline, while the barbarians, elated by ſucceſs, were become ſo negligent and remiſs, that in the moment when they leaſt expected it, they were ſurpriſed by the active conduct of Galerius, who, attended only by two horſemen, had with his own eyes ſecretly examined the ſtate and poſition of their camp. A ſurprize, eſpecially in the night-time, was for the moſt part fatal to a Perſian army. "Their horſes were tied, and generally ſhackled, to prevent their run-

His victory.

[68] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xiv. The mile, in the hands of Eutropius (ix. 24.), of Feſtus (c. 25.), and of Oroſius (vii. 25.), eaſily increaſed to *ſeveral* miles.

[69] Aurelius Victor. Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21.

[70] Aurelius Victor ſays, "Per Armeniam in hoſtes contendit, que ferme ſola, ſeu facilior vincendi via eſt." He followed the conduct of Trajan, and the idea of Julius Cæſar.

"ning away; and if an alarm happened, a Perſian had his houſing "to fix; his horſe to bridle, and his corſlet to put on, before he could "mount[71]." On this occaſion, the impetuous attack of Galerius ſpread diſorder and diſmay over the camp of the barbarians. A ſlight reſiſtance was followed by a dreadful carnage, and, in the general confuſion, the wounded monarch (for Narſes commanded his armies in perſon) fled towards the deſerts of Media. His ſumptuous tents, and thoſe of his ſatraps, afforded an immenſe booty to the conqueror; and an incident is mentioned, which proves the ruſtic but martial ignorance of the legions in the elegant ſuperfluities of life. A bag of ſhining leather filled with pearls, fell into the hands of a private ſoldier; he carefully preſerved the bag, but he threw away its contents, judging, that whatever was of no uſe could not poſſibly be of any value[72]. The principal loſs of Narſes was of a much more affecting nature. Several of his wives, his ſiſters, and children, who had attended the army, were made captives in the defeat. But though the character of Galerius had in general very little affinity with that of Alexander, he imitated, after his victory, the amiable behaviour of the Macedonian towards the family of Darius. The wives and children of Narſes were protected from violence and rapine, conveyed to a place of ſafety, and treated with every mark of reſpect and tenderneſs, that was due from a generous enemy, to their age, their ſex, and their royal dignity[73].

and behaviour to his royal captives.

While the Eaſt anxiouſly expected the deciſion of this great conteſt, the emperor Diocletian, having aſſembled in Syria a ſtrong army of obſervation, diſplayed from a diſtance the reſources of the Roman power, and reſerved himſelf for any future emer-

Negociation for peace.

[71] Xenophon's Anabaſis, l. iii. For that reaſon the Perſian cavalry encamped ſixty ſtadia from the enemy.

[72] The ſtory is told by Ammianus, l. xxii. Inſtead of *ſaccum* ſome read *ſcutum*.

[73] The Perſians confeſſed the Roman ſuperiority in morals as well as in arms. Eutrop. ix. 24. But this reſpect and gratitude of enemies is very ſeldom to be found in their own accounts.

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gency of the war. On the intelligence of the victory, he condeſcended to advance towards the frontier; with a view of moderating, by his preſence and counſels, the pride of Galerius. The interview of the Roman princes at Niſibis was accompanied with every expreſſion of reſpect on one ſide, and of eſteem on the other. It was in that city that they ſoon afterwards gave audience to the ambaſſador of the Great King[74]. The power, or at leaſt the ſpirit of Narſes, had been broken by his laſt defeat; and he conſidered an immediate peace as the only means that could ſtop the progreſs of the Roman arms. He diſpatched Apharban, a ſervant who poſſeſſed his favour and confidence, with a commiſſion to negociate a treaty, or rather to receive whatever conditions the conqueror ſhould impoſe. Apharban opened the conference by expreſſing his maſter's gratitude for the generous treatment of his family, and by ſoliciting the liberty of thoſe illuſtrious captives. He celebrated the valour of Galerius without degrading the reputation of Narſes, and thought it no diſhonour to confeſs the ſuperiority of the victorious Cæſar, over a monarch who had ſurpaſſed in glory all the princes of his race. Notwithſtanding the juſtice of the Perſian cauſe, he was empowered to ſubmit the preſent differences to the deciſion of the emperors themſelves; convinced as he was, that, in the midſt of proſperity, they would not be unmindful of the viciſſitudes of fortune. Apharban concluded his diſcourſe in the ſtyle of eaſtern allegory, by obſerving that the Roman and Perſian monarchies were the two eyes of the world, which would remain imperfect and mutilated if either of them ſhould be put out.

Speech of the Perſian ambaſſador.

"It well becomes the Perſians," replied Galerius, with a tranſport of fury, which ſeemed to convulſe his whole frame, "it well be-

Anſwer of Galerius.

[74] The account of the negotiation is taken from the fragments of Peter the Patrician, in the Excerpta Legationum publiſhed in the Byzantine Collection. Peter lived under Juſtinian; but it is very evident, by the nature of his materials, that they are drawn from the moſt authentic and reſpectable writers.

"comes the Perſians to expatiate on the viciſſitudes of fortune, "and calmly to read us lectures on the virtues of moderation. "Let them remember their own *moderation* towards the unhappy "Valerian. They vanquiſhed him by fraud, they treated him "with indignity. They detained him till the laſt moment of "his life in ſhameful captivity, and after his death they expoſed "his body to perpetual ignominy." Softening, however, his tone, Galerius inſinuated to the ambaſſador, that it had never been the practice of the Romans to trample on a proſtrate enemy; and that, on this occaſion, they ſhould conſult their own dignity, rather than the Perſian merit. He diſmiſſed Apharban with a hope, that Narſes would ſoon be informed on what conditions he might obtain, from the clemency of the emperors, a laſting peace, and the reſtoration of his wives and children. In this conference we may diſcover the fierce paſſions of Galerius, as well as his deference to the ſuperior wiſdom and authority of Diocletian. The ambition of the former graſped at the conqueſt of the Eaſt, and had propoſed to reduce Perſia into the ſtate of a province. The prudence of the latter, who adhered to the moderate policy of Auguſtus and the Antonines, embraced the favourable opportunity of terminating a ſucceſsful war by an honourable and advantageous peace [75].

Moderation of Diocletian.

In purſuance of their promiſe, the emperors ſoon afterwards appointed Sicorius Probus, one of their ſecretaries, to acquaint the Perſian court with their final reſolution. As the miniſter of peace, he was received with every mark of politeneſs and friendſhip; but, under the pretence of allowing him the neceſſary repoſe after ſo long a journey, the audience of Probus was deferred from day to day; and he attended the ſlow motions of the king, till at length he was admitted to his preſence, near the river Aſprudus

Concluſion

[74] Adeo Victor (ſays Aurelius) ut ni Valerius, cujus nutu omnia gerebantur, abnuiſſet, Romani faſces in provinciam novam ferrentur. Verum pars terrarum tamen nobis utilior quæſita.

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in Media. The ſecret motive of Narſes in this delay, had been to collect ſuch a military force, as might enable him, though ſincerely deſirous of peace, to negotiate with the greater weight and dignity. Three perſons only aſſiſted at this important conference, the miniſter Apharban, the præfect of the guards, and an officer who had commanded on the Armenian frontier[76]. The firſt condition propoſed by the ambaſſador, is not at preſent of a very intelligible nature; that the city of Niſibis might be eſtabliſhed for the place of mutual exchange, or, as we ſhould formerly have termed it, for the ſtaple of trade, between the two empires. There is no difficulty in conceiving the intention of the Roman princes to improve their revenue by ſome reſtraints upon commerce; but as Niſibis was ſituated within their own dominions, and as they were maſters both of the imports and exports, it ſhould ſeem, that ſuch reſtraints were the objects of an internal law, rather than of a foreign treaty. To render them more effectual, ſome ſtipulations were probably required on the ſide of the king of Perſia, which appeared ſo very repugnant either to his intereſt or to his dignity, that Narſes could not be perſuaded to ſubſcribe them. As this was the only article to which he refuſed his conſent, it was no longer inſiſted on; and the emperors either ſuffered the trade to flow in its natural channels, or contented themſelves with ſuch reſtrictions, as it depended on their own authority to eſtabliſh.

and articles of the treaty.

As ſoon as this difficulty was removed, a ſolemn peace was concluded and ratified between the two nations. The conditions of a treaty ſo glorious to the empire, and ſo neceſſary to Perſia, may deſerve a more peculiar attention, as the hiſtory of Rome preſents very few tranſactions of a ſimilar nature; moſt of her wars having either been terminated by abſolute conqueſt, or waged againſt

[76] He had been governor of Sumium (Pet. Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 30.). This province ſeems to be mentioned by Moſes of Chorene (Geograph. p. 360.), and lay to the Eaſt of Mount Ararat.

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The Aboras fixed as the limits between the empires.

barbarians ignorant of the uſe of letters. I. The Aboras, or as it is called by Xenophon, the Araxes, was fixed as the boundary between the two monarchies[77]. That river, which roſe near the Tigris, was increaſed a few miles below Niſibis, by the little ſtream of the Mygdonius, paſſed under the walls of Singara, and fell into the Euphrates at Circeſium, a frontier town, which, by the care of Diocletian, was very ſtrongly fortified[78]. Meſopotamia, the object of ſo many wars, was ceded to the empire; and the Perſians, by this treaty, renounced all pretenſions to that great province.

Ceſſion of five provinces beyond the Tigris.

II. They relinquiſhed to the Romans five provinces beyond the Tigris[79]. Their ſituation formed a very uſeful barrier, and their natural ſtrength was ſoon improved by art and military ſkill. Four of theſe, to the north of the river, were diſtricts of obſcure fame and inconſiderable extent; Intiline, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Moxoene: but on the eaſt of the Tigris, the empire acquired the large and mountainous territory of Carduene, the ancient ſeat of the Carduchians, who preſerved for many ages their manly freedom in the heart of the deſpotic monarchies of Aſia. The ten thouſand Greeks traverſed their country, after a painful march, or rather engagement, of ſeven days; and it is confeſſed by their leader, in his incomparable relation of the retreat, that they ſuffered more from the arrows of the Carduchians, than from the power of the Great King[80]. Their poſterity, the Curds, with very little alteration either

[77] By an error of the geographer Ptolemy, the poſition of Singara is removed from the Aboras to the Tigris, which may have produced the miſtake of Peter, in aſſigning the latter river for the boundary, inſtead of the former. The line of the Roman frontier traverſed, but never followed, the courſe of the Tigris.

[78] Procopius de Edificiis, l. ii. c. 6.

[79] Three of the provinces, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Carduene, are allowed on all ſides. But inſtead of the other two, Peter (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30.) inſerts Rehimene and Sophene. I have preferred Ammianus (l. xxv. 7.), becauſe it might be proved, that Sophene was never in the hands of the Perſians, either before the reign of Diocletian, or after that of Jovian. For want of correct maps, like thoſe of M. d'Anville, almoſt all the moderns, with Tillemont and Valeſius at their head, have imagined, that it was in reſpect to Perſia, and not to Rome, that the five provinces were ſituate beyond the Tigris.

[80] Xenophon's Anabaſis, l. iv. Their bows were

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Armenia.

either of name or manners, acknowledged the nominal ſovereignty of the Turkiſh ſultan. III. It is almoſt needleſs to obſerve, that Tiridates, the faithful ally of Rome, was reſtored to the throne of his fathers, and that the rights of the Imperial ſupremacy were fully aſſerted and ſecured. The limits of Armenia were extended as far as the fortreſs of Sintha in Media, and this increaſe of dominion was not ſo much an act of liberality as of juſtice. Of the provinces already mentioned beyond the Tigris, the four firſt had been diſmembered by the Parthians from the crown of Armenia [81]; and when the Romans acquired the poſſeſſion of them, they ſtipulated, at the expence of the uſurpers, an ample compenſation, which inveſted their ally with the extenſive and fertile country of Atropatene. Its principal city, in the ſame ſituation perhaps as the modern Tauris, was frequently honoured with the reſidence of Tiridates; and as it ſometimes bore the name of Ecbatana, he imitated, in the buildings and fortifications, the ſplendid capital of the Medes [82]. IV. The country of Iberia was barren, its inhabitants rude and ſavage. But they were accuſtomed to the uſe of arms, and they ſeparated from the empire barbarians much fiercer and more formidable than themſelves. The narrow defiles of Mount Caucaſus were in their hands, and it was in their choice, either to admit or to exclude the wandering tribes of Sarmatia, whenever a rapacious ſpirit urged them to penetrate into the richer climates of the South [83]. The nomination of the kings of Iberia, which was reſigned by the Perſian monarch to the emperors, contributed to the ſtrength

Iberia.

were three cubits in length, their arrows two; they rolled down ſtones that were each a waggon load. The Greeks found a great many villages in that rude country.

[81] According to Eutropius (vi. 9. as the text is repreſented by the beſt MSS.), the city of Tigranocerta was in Arzanene. The names and ſituation of the other three may be faintly traced.

[82] Compare Herodotus, l. i. c. 97. with Moſes Choronenſ. Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 84. and the map of Armenia given by his editors.

[83] Hiberi, locorum potentes, Caſpiâ viâ Sarmatam in Armenios raptim effundunt. Tacit. Annal. vi. 34. See Strabon. Geograph. l. xi. p. 764.

and

and ſecurity of the Roman power in Aſia [84]. The Eaſt enjoyed a profound tranquillity during forty years; and the treaty between the rival monarchies was ſtrictly obſerved till the death of Tiridates; when a new generation, animated with different views and different paſſions, ſucceeded to the government of the world; and the grandſon of Narſes undertook a long and memorable war againſt the princes of the houſe of Conſtantine.

Triumph of Diocletian and Maximian. A. D. 303. November 20.

The arduous work of reſcuing the diſtreſſed empire from tyrants and barbarians had now been completely atchieved by a ſucceſſion of Illyrian peaſants. As ſoon as Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, he celebrated that memorable æra, as well as the ſucceſs of his arms, by the pomp of a Roman triumph [85]. Maximian, the equal partner of his power, was his only companion in the glory of that day. The two Cæſars had fought and conquered, but the merit of their exploits was aſcribed, according to the rigour of ancient maxims, to the auſpicious influence of their fathers and emperors [86]. The triumph of Diocletian and Maximian was leſs magnificent perhaps than thoſe of Aurelian and Probus, but it was dignified by ſeveral circumſtances of ſuperior fame and good fortune. Africa and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furniſhed their reſpective trophies; but the moſt diſtinguiſhed ornament was of a more ſingular nature, a Perſian victory followed by an important conqueſt. The repreſentations of rivers, mountains, and provinces, were carried before the Imperial car. The images of the captive wives, the ſiſters, and the children of the Great King, afforded a new and grateful ſpectacle to the vanity of the

[84] Peter Patricius (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30.) is the only writer who mentions the Iberian article of the treaty.

[85] Euſebius in Chron. Pagi ad annum. Till the diſcovery of the treatiſe De Mortibus Perſecutorum, it was not certain that the triumph and the Vincenalia were celebrated at the ſame time.

[86] At the time of the Vincenalia, Galerius ſeems to have kept his ſtation on the Danube. See Lactant. de M. P. c. 38.

people.

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people [87]. In the eyes of poſterity this triumph is remarkable, by a diſtinction of a leſs honourable kind. It was the laſt that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, the emperors ceaſed to vanquiſh, and Rome ceaſed to be the capital of the empire.

Long abſence of the emperors from Rome.

The ſpot on which Rome was founded, had been conſecrated by ancient ceremonies and imaginary miracles. The preſence of ſome god, or the memory of ſome hero, ſeemed to animate every part of the city, and the empire of the world had been promiſed to the Capitol [88]. The native Romans felt and confeſſed the power of this agreeable illuſion. It was derived from their anceſtors, had grown up with their earlieſt habits of life, and was protected, in ſome meaſure, by the opinion of political utility. The form and the ſeat of government were intimately blended together, nor was it eſteemed poſſible to tranſport the one without deſtroying the other [89]. But the ſovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated in the extent of conqueſt; the provinces roſe to the ſame level, and the vanquiſhed nations acquired the name and privileges, without imbibing the partial affections, of Romans. During a long period, however, the remains of the ancient conſtitution, and the influence of cuſtom, preſerved the dignity of Rome. The emperors, though perhaps of African or Illyrian extraction, reſpected their adopted country, as the ſeat of their power, and the centre of their extenſive dominions. The emergencies of war very frequently required their preſence on the frontiers; but Diocletian and Maximian were the firſt Roman princes

[87] Eutropius (ix. 27.) mentions them as a part of the triumph. As the *perſons* had been reſtored to Narſes, nothing more than their *images* could be exhibited.

[88] Livy gives us a ſpeech of Camillus on that ſubject (v. 51—55.), full of eloquence and ſenſibility, in oppoſition to a deſign of removing the ſeat of government from Rome to the neighbouring city of Veii.

[89] Julius Cæſar was reproached with the intention of removing the empire to Ilium or Alexandria. See Sueton. in Cæſar. c. 79. According to the ingenious conjecture of Le Fevre and Dacier, the third ode of the third book of Horace was intended to divert Auguſtus from the execution of a ſimilar deſign.

who

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who fixed, in time of peace, their ordinary reſidence in the provinces; and their conduct, however it might be ſuggeſted by private motives, was juſtified by very ſpecious conſiderations of policy. The court of the emperor of the Weſt was, for the moſt part, eſtabliſhed at Milan, whoſe ſituation, at the foot of the Alps, appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpoſe of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Milan ſoon aſſumed the ſplendour of an Imperial city. The houſes are deſcribed as numerous and well-built; the manners of the people as poliſhed and liberal. A circus, a theatre, a mint, a palace, baths, which bore the name of their founder Maximian; porticoes adorned with ſtatues, and a double circumference of walls, contributed to the beauty of the new capital; nor did it ſeem oppreſſed even by the proximity of Rome [90]. To rival the majeſty of Rome was the ambition likewiſe of Diocletian, who employed his leiſure, and the wealth of the Eaſt, in the embelliſhment of Nicomedia, a city placed on the verge of Europe and Aſia, almoſt at an equal diſtance between the Danube and the Euphrates. By the taſte of the monarch, and at the expence of the people, Nicomedia acquired, in the ſpace of a few years, a degree of magnificence which might appear to have required the labour of ages, and became inferior only to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, in extent or populouſneſs [91]. The life of Diocletian and Maximian was a life of action, and a conſiderable portion of it was ſpent in camps, or in their long

Their reſidence at Milan

and Nicomedia.

[90] See Aurelius Victor, who likewiſe mentions the buildings erected by Maximian at Carthage, probably during the Mooriſh war. We ſhall inſert ſome verſes of Auſonius de Clar. Urb. v.

Et Mediolani mira omnia: copia rerum;
Innumeræ cultæque domus; facunda virorum
Ingenia, et mores læti, tum duplice muro
Amplificata loci ſpecies; populique voluptas
Circus; et incluſi moles cuneata Theatri
Templa, Palatinæque arces, opulenſque Moneta,
Et regio *Herculei* celebris ſub honore lavacri.
Cunctaque marmoreis ornata Peryſtyla ſignis;
Mœniaque in valli formam circumdata labro,
Omnia quæ magnis operum velut æmula formis
Excellunt: nec junctæ premit vicinia Romæ.

[91] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. Libanius Orat. viii. p. 203.

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and frequent marches; but whenever the public buſineſs allowed them any relaxation, they ſeem to have retired with pleaſure to their favourite reſidences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever viſited the ancient capital of the empire. Even on that memorable occaſion his ſtay did not exceed two months. Diſguſted with the licentious familiarity of the people, he quitted Rome with precipitation thirteen days before it was expected that he ſhould have appeared in the ſenate, inveſted with the enſigns of the conſular dignity [92].

Debaſement of Rome and of the ſenate.

The diſlike expreſſed by Diocletian towards Rome and Roman freedom, was not the effect of momentary caprice, but the reſult of the moſt artful policy. That crafty prince had framed a new ſyſtem of Imperial government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Conſtantine; and as the image of the old conſtitution was religiouſly preſerved in the ſenate, he reſolved to deprive that order of its ſmall remains of power and conſideration. We may recollect, about eight years before the elevation of Diocletian, the tranſient greatneſs, and the ambitious hopes, of the Roman ſenate. As long as that enthuſiaſm prevailed, many of the nobles imprudently diſplayed their zeal in the cauſe of freedom; and after the ſucceſſors of Probus had withdrawn their countenance from the republican party, the ſenators were unable to diſguiſe their impotent reſentment. As the ſovereign of Italy, Maximian was intruſted with the care of extinguiſhing this troubleſome, rather than dangerous, ſpirit, and the taſk was perfectly ſuited to his cruel temper. The moſt illuſtrious members of the ſenate, whom Diocletian always affected to eſteem, were involved, by his colleague, in the accuſation of imaginary plots; and the poſſeſſion of

[92] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. On a ſimilar occaſion Ammianus mentions the *dicacitas plebis*, as not very agreeable to an Imperial ear. (See l. xvi. c. 10.)

an elegant villa, or a well cultivated eſtate, was interpreted as a convincing evidence of guilt [93]. The camp of the Prætorians, which had ſo long oppreſſed, began to protect, the majeſty of Rome; and as thoſe haughty troops were conſcious of the decline of their power, they were naturally diſpoſed to unite their ſtrength with the authority of the ſenate. By the prudent meaſures of Diocletian, the numbers of the Prætorians were inſenſibly reduced, their privileges aboliſhed [94], and their place ſupplied by two faithful legions of Illyricum, who, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were appointed to perform the ſervice of the Imperial guards [95]. But the moſt fatal though ſecret wound, which the ſenate received from the hands of Diocletian and Maximian, was inflicted by the inevitable operation of their abſence. As long as the emperors reſided at Rome, that aſſembly might be oppreſſed, but it could ſcarcely be neglected. The ſucceſſors of Auguſtus exerciſed the power of dictating whatever laws their wiſdom or caprice might ſuggeſt; but thoſe laws were ratified by the ſanction of the ſenate. The model of ancient freedom was preſerved in its deliberations and decrees; and wiſe princes, who reſpected the prejudices of the Roman people, were in ſome meaſure obliged to aſſume the language and behaviour ſuitable to the general and firſt magiſtrate of the republic. In the armies and in the provinces, they diſplayed the dignity of monarchs; and when they fixed their reſidence at a diſtance from the capital, they for ever laid aſide the diſſimulation which Auguſtus had recommended to his

New bodies of guards, Jovians and Herculians.

[93] Lactantius accuſes Maximian of deſtroying fictis criminationibus lumina ſenatûs (De M. P. c. 8.). Aurelius Victor ſpeaks very doubtfully of the faith of Diocletian towards his friends.

[94] Truncatæ vires urbis, imminuto prætoriarum cohortium atque in armis vulgi numero. Aurelius Victor. Lactantius attributes to Galerius the proſecution of the ſame plan (c. 26.).

[95] They were old corps ſtationed in Illyricum; and according to the ancient eſtabliſhment, they each conſiſted of ſix thouſand men. They had acquired much reputation by the uſe of the *plumbatæ*, or darts loaded with lead. Each ſoldier carried five of theſe, which he darted from a conſiderable diſtance, with great ſtrength and dexterity. See Vegetius, i. 17.

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ſucceſſors. In the exerciſe of the legiſlative as well as the executive power, the ſovereign adviſed with his miniſters, inſtead of conſulting the great council of the nation. The name of the ſenate was mentioned with honour till the laſt period of the empire; the vanity of its members was ſtill flattered with honorary diſtinctions [96]; but the aſſembly which had ſo long been the ſource, and ſo long the inſtrument of power, was reſpectfully ſuffered to ſink into oblivion. The ſenate of Rome, loſing all connection with the Imperial court and the actual conſtitution, was left a venerable but uſeleſs monument of antiquity on the Capitoline hill.

Civil magiſtracies laid aſide.

When the Roman princes had loſt ſight of the ſenate and of their ancient capital, they eaſily forgot the origin and nature of their legal power. The civil offices of conſul, of proconſul, of cenſor, and of tribune, by the union of which it had been formed, betrayed to the people its republican extraction. Thoſe modeſt titles were laid aſide [97]; and if they ſtill diſtinguiſhed their high ſtation by the appellation of Emperor, or IMPERATOR, that word was underſtood in a new and more dignified ſenſe, and no longer denoted the general of the Roman armies, but the ſovereign of the Roman world.

Imperial dignity and titles.

The name of Emperor, which was at firſt of a military nature, was aſſociated with another of a more ſervile kind. The epithet of DOMINUS, or Lord, in its primitive ſignification, was expreſſive, not of the authority of a prince over his ſubjects, or of a commander over his ſoldiers, but of the deſpotic power of a maſter over his domeſtic ſlaves [98]. Viewing it in that odious light, it had been rejected with abhorrence by the firſt Cæſars. Their reſiſtance inſen-

[96] See the Theodoſian Code, l. vi. tit. ii. with Godefroy's commentary.

[97] See the 12th diſſertation in Spanheim's excellent work De Uſu Numiſmatum. From medals, inſcriptions, and hiſtorians, he examines every title ſeparately, and traces it from Auguſtus to the moment of its diſappearing.

[98] Pliny (in Panegyr. c. 3. 55, &c.) ſpeaks of *Dominus* with execration, as ſynonymous to Tyrant, and oppoſite to Prince. And the ſame Pliny regularly gives that title (in the tenth book of the epiſtles) to his friend rather than maſter, the virtuous Trajan. This ſtrange contradiction puzzles the commentators, who think, and the tranſlators, who can write.

ſibly

ſibly became more feeble, and the name leſs odious; till at length the ſtyle of *our Lord and Emperor* was not only beſtowed by flattery, but was regularly admitted into the laws and public monuments. Such lofty epithets were ſufficient to elate and ſatisfy the moſt exceſſive vanity; and if the ſucceſſors of Diocletian ſtill declined the title of King, it ſeems to have been the effect not ſo much of their moderation as of their delicacy. Wherever the Latin tongue was in uſe (and it was the language of government throughout the empire), the Imperial title, as it was peculiar to themſelves, conveyed a more reſpectable idea than the name of King, which they muſt have ſhared with an hundred barbarian chieftains; or which, at the beſt, they could derive only from Romulus or from Tarquin. But the ſentiments of the Eaſt were very different from thoſe of the Weſt. From the earlieſt period of hiſtory, the ſovereigns of Aſia had been celebrated in the Greek language by the title of BASILEUS, or King; and ſince it was conſidered as the firſt diſtinction among men, it was ſoon employed by the ſervile provincials of the Eaſt, in their humble addreſſes to the Roman throne [99]. Even the attributes, or at leaſt the titles of the DIVINITY, were uſurped by Diocletian and Maximian, who tranſmitted them to a ſucceſſion of Chriſtian emperors [100]. Such extravagant compliments, however, ſoon loſe their impiety by loſing their meaning; and when the ear is once accuſtomed to the ſound, they are heard with indifference as vague though exceſſive profeſſions of reſpect.

From the time of Auguſtus to that of Diocletian, the Roman princes converſing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, were ſaluted only with the ſame reſpect that was uſually paid

Diocletian aſſumes the diadem, and introduces the Perſian ceremonial.

[99] Syneſius de Regno, Edit. Petav. p. 15. I am indebted for this quotation to the Abbé de la Bleterie.

[100] See Vendale de Conſecratione, p. 354, &c. It was cuſtomary for the emperors to mention (in the preamble of laws) their *numen*, *ſacred majeſty*, *divine oracles*, &c. According to Tillemont, Gregory of Nazianzen complains moſt bitterly of the profanation, eſpecially when it was practiſed by an Arian emperor.

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to ſenators and magiſtrates. Their principal diſtinction was the Imperial or military robe of purple; whilſt the ſenatorial garment was marked by a broad, and the equeſtrian by a narrow, band or ſtripe of the ſame honourable colour. The pride, or rather the policy, of Diocletian, engaged that artful prince to introduce the ſtately magnificence of the court of Perſia [101]. He ventured to aſſume the diadem, an ornament deteſted by the Romans as the odious enſign of royalty, and the uſe of which had been conſidered as the moſt deſperate act of the madneſs of Caligula. It was no more than a broad white fillet ſet with pearls, which encircled the emperor's head. The ſumptuous robes of Diocletian and his ſucceſſors were of ſilk and gold; and it is remarked with indignation, that even their ſhoes were ſtudded with the moſt precious gems. The acceſs to their ſacred perſon was every day rendered more difficult, by the inſtitution of new forms and ceremonies. The avenues of the palace were ſtrictly guarded by the various *ſchools*, as they began to be called, of domeſtic officers. The interior apartments were intruſted to the jealous vigilance of the eunuchs; the increaſe of whoſe numbers and influence was the moſt infallible ſymptom of the progreſs of deſpotiſm. When a ſubject was at length admitted to the Imperial preſence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall proſtrate on the ground, and to adore, according to the eaſtern faſhion, the divinity of his lord and maſter [102]. Diocletian was a man of ſenſe, who, in the courſe of private as well as public life, had formed a juſt eſtimate both of himſelf and of mankind: nor is it eaſy to conceive, that in ſubſtituting the manners of Perſia to thoſe of Rome, he was ſeriouſly actuated by ſo mean a principle as that of vanity. He flattered himſelf, that an oſtentation of

[101] See Spanheim de Uſu Numiſmat. Diſſert. xii.

[102] Aurelius Victor. Eutropius ix. 26. It appears by the Panegyriſts, that the Romans were ſoon reconciled to the name and ceremony of adoration.

ſplendour

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ſplendour and luxury would ſubdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be leſs expoſed to the rude licence of the people and the ſoldiers, as his perſon was ſecluded from the public view; and that habits of ſubmiſſion would inſenſibly be productive of ſentiments of veneration. Like the modeſty affected by Auguſtus, the ſtate maintained by Diocletian was a theatrical repreſentation; but it muſt be confeſſed, that of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to diſguiſe, and the object of the other to diſplay, the unbounded power which the emperors poſſeſſed over the Roman world.

New form of adminiſtration, two Auguſti, and two Cæſars.

Oſtentation was the firſt principle of the new ſyſtem inſtituted by Diocletian. The ſecond was diviſion. He divided the empire, the provinces, and every branch of the civil as well as military adminiſtration. He multiplied the wheels of the machine of government, and rendered its operations leſs rapid but more ſecure. Whatever advantages, and whatever defects might attend theſe innovations, they muſt be aſcribed in a very great degree to the firſt inventor; but as the new frame of policy was gradually improved and completed by ſucceeding princes, it will be more ſatisfactory to delay the conſideration of it till the ſeaſon of its full maturity and perfection [103]. Reſerving, therefore, for the reign of Conſtantine a more exact picture of the new empire, we ſhall content ourſelves with deſcribing the principal and deciſive outline, as it was traced by the hand of Diocletian. He had aſſociated three colleagues in the exerciſe of the ſupreme power; and as he was convinced that the abilities of a ſingle man were inadequate to the public defence, he conſidered the joint adminiſtration of four princes

[103] The innovations introduced by Diocletian, are chiefly deduced, 1ſt, from ſome very ſtrong paſſages in Lactantius; and, 2dly, from the new and various offices, which, in the Theodoſian code, appear *already* eſtabliſhed in the beginning of the reign of Conſtantine.

not

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not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the conſtitution. It was his intention, that the two elder princes ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by the uſe of the diadem, and the title of *Auguſti*: that, as affection or eſteem might direct their choice, they ſhould regularly call to their aſſiſtance two ſubordinate colleagues; and that the *Cæſars*, riſing in their turn to the firſt rank, ſhould ſupply an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of emperors. The empire was divided into four parts. The Eaſt and Italy were the moſt honourable, the Danube and the Rhine the moſt laborious ſtations. The former claimed the preſence of the *Auguſti*, the latter were intruſted to the adminiſtration of the *Cæſars*. The ſtrength of the legions was in the hands of the four partners of ſovereignty, and the deſpair of ſucceſſively vanquiſhing four formidable rivals, might intimidate the ambition of an aſpiring general. In their civil government, the emperors were ſuppoſed to exerciſe the undivided power of the monarch, and their edicts, inſcribed with their joint names, were received in all the provinces, as promulgated by their mutual councils and authority. Notwithſtanding theſe precautions, the political union of the Roman world was gradually diſſolved, and a principle of diviſion was introduced, which, in the courſe of a few years, occaſioned the perpetual ſeparation of the eaſtern and weſtern empires.

Increaſe of taxes.

The ſyſtem of Diocletian was accompanied with another very material diſadvantage, which cannot even at preſent be totally overlooked; a more expenſive eſtabliſhment, and conſequently an increaſe of taxes, and the oppreſſion of the people. Inſtead of a modeſt family of ſlaves and freedmen, ſuch as had contented the ſimple greatneſs of Auguſtus and Trajan, three or four magnificent courts were eſtabliſhed in the various parts of the empire, and as many Roman *kings* contended with each other and with the Perſian monarch for the vain ſuperiority of pomp and luxury. The number of miniſters, of magiſtrates, of officers, and of ſervants, who

filled the different departments of the ſtate, was multiplied beyond the example of former times; and (if we may borrow the warm expreſſion of a contemporary), "when the proportion of thoſe who "received, exceeded the proportion of thoſe who contributed, the "provinces were oppreſſed by the weight of tributes[104]." From this period to the extinction of the empire, it would be eaſy to deduce an uninterrupted ſeries of clamours and complaints. According to his religion and ſituation, each writer chuſes either Dioclétian, or Conſtantine, or Valens, or Theodoſius, for the object of his invectives; but they unanimouſly agree in repreſenting the burden of the public impoſitions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable and increaſing grievance of their own times. From ſuch a concurrence, an impartial hiſtorian, who is obliged to extract truth from ſatire, as well as from panegyric, will be inclined to divide the blame among the princes whom they accuſe, and to aſcribe their exactions much leſs to their perſonal vices, than to the uniform ſyſtem of their adminiſtration. The emperor Diocletian was indeed the author of that ſyſtem; but during his reign, the growing evil was confined within the bounds of modeſty and diſcretion, and he deſerves the reproach of eſtabliſhing pernicious precedents, rather than of exerciſing actual oppreſſion[105]. It may be added, that his revenues were managed with prudent œconomy; and that after all the current expences were diſcharged, there ſtill remained in the Imperial treaſury an ample proviſion either for judicious liberality or for any emergency of the ſtate.

It was in the twenty-firſt year of his reign that Diocletian executed his memorable reſolution of abdicating the empire; an action more naturally to have been expected from the elder or the younger

Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian.

[104] Lactant. de M. P. c. 7.

[105] Indicta lex nova quæ ſane illorum temporum modeſtiâ tolerabilis, in perniciem proceſſit. Aurel. Victor, who has treated the character of Diocletian with good ſenſe, though in bad Latin.

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Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practiſed the leſſons of philoſophy either in the attainment or in the uſe of ſupreme power. Diocletian acquired the glory of giving to the world the firſt example of a reſignation [106], which has not been very frequently imitated by ſucceeding monarchs. The parallel of Charles the Fifth, however, will naturally offer itſelf to our mind, not only ſince the eloquence of a modern hiſtorian has rendered that name ſo familiar to an Engliſh reader, but from the very ſtriking reſemblance between the characters of the two emperors, whoſe political abilities were ſuperior to their military genius, and whoſe ſpecious virtues were much leſs the effect of nature than of art. The abdication of Charles appears to have been haſtened by the viciſſitude of fortune; and the diſappointment of his favourite ſchemes urged him to relinquiſh a power which he found inadequate to his ambition. But the reign of Diocletian had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted ſucceſs; nor was it till after he had vanquiſhed all his enemies, and accompliſhed all his deſigns, that he ſeems to have entertained any ſerious thoughts of reſigning the empire. Neither Charles nor Diocletian were arrived at a very advanced period of life; ſince the one was only fifty-five, and the other was no more than fifty-nine years of age; but the active life of thoſe princes, their wars and journies, the cares of royalty, and their application to buſineſs, had already impaired their conſtitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age [107].

Reſemblance to Charles the Fifth.

A. D. 304. Long illneſs of Diocletian.

Notwithſtanding the ſeverity of a very cold and rainy winter, Diocletian left Italy ſoon after the ceremony of his triumph, and began his progreſs towards the Eaſt round the circuit of the Illyrian pro-

[106] Solus omnium, poſt conditum Romanum Imperium, qui ex tanto faſtigio ſponte ad privatæ vitæ ſtatum civilitatemque remearet. Eutrop. ix. 28.

[107] The particulars of the journey and illneſs are taken from Lactantius (c. 17.), who may *ſometimes* be admitted as an evidence of public facts, though very ſeldom of private anecdotes.

vinces. From the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey, he ſoon contracted a ſlow illneſs; and though he made eaſy marches, aud was generally carried in a cloſe litter, his diſorder, before he arrived at Nicomedia, about the end of the ſummer, was become very ſerious and alarming. During the whole winter he was confined to his palace; his danger inſpired a general and unaffected concern; but the people could only judge of the various alterations of his health, from the joy or conſternation which they diſcovered in the countenances and behaviour of his attendants. The rumour of his death was for ſome time univerſally believed, and it was ſuppoſed to be concealed, with a view to prevent the troubles that might have happened during the abſence of the Cæſar Galerius. At length, however, on the firſt of March, Diocletian once more appeared in public, but ſo pale and emaciated, that he could ſcarcely have been recogniſed by thoſe to whom his perſon was the moſt familiar. It was time to put an end to the painful ſtruggle, which he had ſuſtained during more than a year, between the care of his health and that of his dignity. The former required indulgence and relaxation, the latter compelled him to direct, from the bed of ſickneſs, the adminiſtration of a great empire. He reſolved to paſs the remainder of his days in honourable repoſe, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquiſh the theatre of the world to his younger and more active aſſociates [108].

His prudence.

The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a ſpacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor aſcended a lofty throne, and in a ſpeech, full of reaſon and dignity, declared his intention, both to the people and to the ſoldiers who were aſſembled on this extraordinary occaſion. As ſoon as he had diveſted

A. D. 305. May 1.

[108] Aurelius Victor aſcribes the abdication, which had been ſo variouſly accounted for, to two cauſes. 1ſt, Diocletian's contempt of ambition; and 2dly, His apprehenſion of impending troubles. One of the panegyriſts (vi. 9.) mentions the age and infirmities of Diocletian, as a very natural reaſon for his retirement.

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himſelf of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude; and traverſing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favourite retirement which he had choſen in his native country of Dalmatia. On the ſame day, which was the firſt of May [109], Maximian, as it had been previouſly concerted, made his reſignation of the Imperial dignity at Milan. Even in the ſplendour of the Roman triumph, Diocletian had meditated his deſign of abdicating the government. As he wiſhed to ſecure the obedience of Maximian, he exacted from him, either a general aſſurance that he would ſubmit his actions to the authority of his benefactor, or a particular promiſe that he would deſcend from the throne, whenever he ſhould receive the advice and the example. This engagement, though it was confirmed by the ſolemnity of an oath before the altar of the Capitoline Jupiter [110], would have proved a feeble reſtraint on the fierce temper of Maximian, whoſe paſſion was the love of power, and who neither deſired preſent tranquillity nor future reputation. But he yielded, however reluctantly, to the aſcendant which his wiſer colleague had acquired over him, and retired, immediately after his abdication, to a villa in Lucania, where it was almoſt impoſſible that ſuch an impatient ſpirit could find any laſting tranquillity.

Compliance of Maximian.

Diocletian, who, from a ſervile origin, had raiſed himſelf to the throne, paſſed the nine laſt years of his life in a private condition. Reaſon had dictated, and content ſeems to have accompanied, his retreat, in which he enjoyed for a long time the reſpect of thoſe princes to whom he had reſigned the poſſeſſion of the world [111]. It

Retirement of Diocletian at Salona.

[109] The difficulties as well as miſtakes attending the dates both of the year and of the day of Diocletian's abdication, are perfectly cleared up by Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. p. 525, Note 19, and by Pagi ad annum.

[110] See Panegyr. Veter. vi. 9. The oration was pronounced after Maximian had reaſſumed the purple.

[111] Eumenius pays him a very fine compliment: "At enim divinum illum virum, qui "primus imperium et participavit et poſuit, "conſilii

It is ſeldom that minds, long exerciſed in buſineſs, have formed any habits of converſing with themſelves, and in the loſs of power they principally regret the want of occupation. The amuſements of letters and of devotion, which afford ſo many reſources in ſolitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Diocletian; but he had preſerved, or at leaſt he ſoon recovered, a taſte for the moſt innocent as well as natural pleaſures, and his leiſure hours were ſufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening. His anſwer to Maximian is deſervedly celebrated. He was ſolicited by that reſtleſs old man to re-aſſume the reins of government and the Imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a ſmile of pity, calmly obſerving, that if he could ſhew Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he ſhould no longer be urged to relinquiſh the enjoyment of happineſs for the purſuit of power[112]. In his converſations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged, that of all arts, the moſt difficult was the art of reigning; and he expreſſed himſelf on that favourite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the reſult only of experience. "How often, was he accuſtomed to ſay, is it the intereſt "of four or five miniſters to combine together to deceive their "ſovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the "truth is concealed from his knowledge; he can ſee only with "their eyes, he hears nothing but their miſrepreſentations. He "confers the moſt important offices upon vice and weakneſs, and "diſgraces the moſt virtuous and deſerving among his ſubjects. "By ſuch infamous arts, added Diocletian, the beſt and wiſeſt "princes are ſold to the venal corruption of their courtiers[113]."

His philoſophy,

"conſilii et facti ſui non pœnitet; nec ami-"ſiſſe ſe putat quod ſponte tranſcripſit. Fe-"lix beatuſque vere quem veſtra, tantorum "principum, colunt obſequia privatum." Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

[112] We are obliged to the younger Victor for this celebrated bon môt. Eutropius mentions the thing in a more general manner.

[113] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 223, 224. Vopiſcus had learned this converſation from his father.

A juſt

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A juſt eſtimate of greatneſs, and the aſſurance of immortal fame, improve our reliſh for the pleaſures of retirement; but the Roman emperor had filled too important a character in the world, to enjoy without allay the comforts and ſecurity of a private condition. It was impoſſible that he could remain ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the empire after his abdication. It was impoſſible that he could be indifferent to their conſequences. Fear, ſorrow, and diſcontent, ſometimes purſued him into the ſolitude of Salona. His tenderneſs, or at leaſt his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter; and the laſt moments of Diocletian were embitttered by ſome affronts, which Licinius and Conſtantine might have ſpared the father of ſo many emperors, and the firſt author of their own fortune. A report, though of a very doubtful nature, has reached our times, that he prudently withdrew himſelf from their power by a voluntary death [114].

and death. A. D. 313.

Before we diſmiſs the conſideration of the life and character of Diocletian, we may, for a moment, direct our view to the place of his retirement. Salona, a principal city of his native province of Dalmatia, was near two hundred Roman miles (according to the meaſurement of the public highways) from Aquileia and the confines of Italy, and about two hundred and ſeventy from Sirmium, the uſual reſidence of the emperors whenever they viſited the Illyrian frontier [115]. A miſerable village ſtill preſerves the name of Salona; but ſo late as the ſixteenth century, the remains of a theatre, and a confuſed proſpect of broken arches and marble columns, continued to atteſt its ancient ſplendour [116]. About ſix or ſeven miles

Deſcription of Salona and the adjacent country.

[114] The younger Victor ſlightly mentions the report. But as Diocletian had diſobliged a powerful and ſucceſsful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune. It has been affirmed that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the Roman ſenate, &c.

[115] See the Itiner. p. 269. 272. Edit. Weſſel.

[116] The Abate Fortis, in his Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 43. (printed at Venice in the year 1774, in two ſmall volumes in quarto) quotes a MS. account of the antiquities of Salona, compoſed by Giambattiſta Giuſtiniani about the middle of the xvith century.

from

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from the city, Diocletian conſtructed a magnificent palace, and we may infer, from the greatneſs of the work, how long he had meditated his deſign of abdicating the empire. The choice of a ſpot which united all that could contribute either to health or to luxury, did not require the partiality of a native. "The ſoil was "dry and fertile, the air is pure and wholeſome, and though ex- "tremely hot during the ſummer months, this country ſeldom "feels thoſe ſultry and noxious winds, to which the coaſts of "Iſtria and ſome parts of Italy are expoſed. The views from "the palace are no leſs beautiful than the ſoil and climate were in- "viting. Towards the weſt lies the fertile ſhore that ſtretches "along the Hadriatic, in which a number of ſmall iſlands are "ſcattered in ſuch a manner, as to give this part of the ſea the "appearance of a great lake. On the north ſide lies the bay, "which led to the ancient city of Salona; and the country be- "yond it, appearing in ſight, forms a proper contraſt to that "more extenſive proſpect of water, which the Hadriatic preſents "both to the ſouth and to the eaſt. Towards the north, the view "is terminated by high and irregular mountains, ſituated at a proper "diſtance, and, in many places, covered with villages, woods, and "vineyards[117]."

Of Diocletian's palace.

Though Conſtantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt[118], yet one of their ſucceſſors, who could only ſee it in a neglected and mutilated ſtate,

[117] Adam's antiquities of Diocletian's palace at Spalatro, p. 6. We may add a circumſtance or two from the Abate Fortis: the little ſtream of the Hyader, mentioned by Lucan, produces moſt exquiſite trout, which a ſagacious writer, perhaps a monk, ſuppoſes to have been one of the principal reaſons that determined Diocletian in the choice of his retirement. Fortis, p. 45. The ſame author (p. 38.) obſerves, that a taſte for agriculture is reviving at Spalatro; and that an experimental farm has lately been eſtabliſhed near the city, by a ſociety of Gentlemen.

[118] Conſtantin. Orat. ad Cœtum Sanct. c. 25. In this ſermon, the emperor, or the biſhop who compoſed it for him, affects to relate the miſerable end of all the perſecutors of the church.

celebrates

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celebrates its magnificence in terms of the higheſt admiration [119]. It covered an extent of ground conſiſting of between nine and ten Engliſh acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with ſixteen towers. Two of the ſides were near ſix hundred, and the other two near ſeven hundred feet in length. The whole was conſtructed of a beautiful free-ſtone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau or Tragutium, and very little inferior to marble itſelf. Four ſtreets, interſecting each other at right angles, divided the ſeveral parts of this great edifice, and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very ſtately entrance, which is ſtill denominated the Golden Gate. The approach was terminated by a *periſtylium* of granite columns, on one ſide of which we diſcover the ſquare temple of Æſculapius, on the other the octagon temple of Jupiter. The latter of thoſe deities Diocletian revered as the patron of his fortunes, the former as the protector of his health. By comparing the preſent remains with the precepts of Vitruvius, the ſeveral parts of the building, the baths, bedchamber, the *atrium*, the *baſilica*, and the Cyzicene, Corinthian, and Egyptian halls, have been deſcribed with ſome degree of preciſion, or at leaſt of probability. Their forms were various, their proportions juſt, but they were all attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taſte and conveniency. Theſe ſtately rooms had neither windows nor chimnies. They were lighted from the top (for the building ſeems to have conſiſted of no more than one ſtory), and they received their heat by the help of pipes that were conveyed along the walls. The range of principal apartments was protected towards the ſouth-weſt, by a portico five hundred and ſeventeen feet long, which muſt have formed a very noble and delightful walk, when the beauties of painting and ſculpture were added to thoſe of the proſpect.

[119] Conſtantin. Porphyr. de Statu Imper. p. 86.

Had

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Had this magnificent edifice remained in a ſolitary country, it would have been expoſed to the ravages of time; but it might, perhaps, have eſcaped the rapacious induſtry of man. The village of Aſpalathus [120], and long afterwards the provincial town of Spalatro, have grown out of its ruins. The golden gate now opens into the market-place. St. John the Baptiſt has uſurped the honours of Æſculapius: and the temple of Jupiter, under the protection of the Virgin, is converted into the cathedral church. For this account of Diocletian's palace, we are principally indebted to an ingenious artiſt of our own time and country, whom a very liberal curioſity carried into the heart of Dalmatia [121]. But there is room to ſuſpect, that the elegance of his deſigns and engraving has ſomewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpoſe to repreſent. We are informed by a more recent and very judicious traveller, that the awful ruins of Spalatro are not leſs expreſſive of the decline of the arts, than of the greatneſs of the Roman empire in the time of Diocletian [122]. If ſuch was indeed the ſtate of architecture, we muſt naturally believe that painting and ſculpture had experienced a ſtill more ſenſible decay. The practice of architecture is directed by a few general and even mechanical rules. But ſculpture, and above all, painting, propoſe to themſelves the imitation not only of the forms of nature, but of the characters and paſſions of the human ſoul. In thoſe ſublime arts, the dexterity of the hand is of little avail, unleſs it is animated by fancy, and guided by the moſt correct taſte and obſervation.

Decline of the arts.

[120] D'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 162.

[121] Meſſieurs Adam and Cleriſſeau, attended by two draughtſmen, viſited Spalatro in the month of July 1757. The magnificent work which their journey produced, was publiſhed in London ſeven years afterwards.

[122] I ſhall quote the words of the Abate Fortis. "E'baſtevolmente nota agli amatori "dell' Architettura, e dell' Antichità, l'ope- "ra del Signor ADAMS, che a donato molto "a que' ſuperbi veſtigi coll' abituale eleganza "del ſuo toccalapis e del bulino. In gene- "rale la rozzezza del ſcalpello, e'l cativo "guſto del ſecolo vi gareggiano colla mag- "nificenza del fabricato." See Viaggio in Dalmazia, p. 40.

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Of letters.

It is almoſt unneceſſary to remark, that the civil diſtractions of the empire, the licence of the ſoldiers, the inroads of the barbarians, and the progreſs of deſpotiſm, had proved very unfavourable to genius, and even to learning. The ſucceſſion of Illyrian princes reſtored the empire, without reſtoring the ſciences. Their military education was not calculated to inſpire them with the love of letters; and even the mind of Diocletian, however active and capacious in buſineſs, was totally uninformed by ſtudy or ſpeculation. The profeſſions of law and phyſic are of ſuch common uſe and certain profit, that they will always ſecure a ſufficient number of practitioners, endowed with a reaſonable degree of abilities and knowledge; but it does not appear that the ſtudents in thoſe two faculties appeal to any celebrated maſters who have flouriſhed within that period. The voice of poetry was ſilent. Hiſtory was reduced to dry and confuſed abridgments, alike deſtitute of amuſement and inſtruction. A languid and affected eloquence was ſtill retained in the pay and ſervice of the emperors, who encouraged not any arts except thoſe which contributed to the gratification of their pride, or the defence of their power [123].

The new Platoniſts.

The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked, however, by the riſe and rapid progreſs of the new Platoniſts. The ſchool of Alexandria ſilenced thoſe of Athens; and the ancient ſects enrolled themſelves under the banners of the more faſhionable teachers, who recommended their ſyſtem by the novelty of their method, and the auſterity of their manners. Several of theſe maſters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry [124], were men of profound thought,

[123] The orator Eumenius was ſecretary to the emperors Maximian and Conſtantius, and Profeſſor of Rhetoric in the college of Autun. His ſalary was ſix hundred thouſand ſeſterces, which, according to the loweſt computation of that age, muſt have exceeded three thouſand pounds a year. He generouſly requeſted the permiſſion of employing it in rebuilding the college. See his Oration De reſtaurandis ſcholis; which, though not exempt from vanity, may atone for his panegyrics.

[124] Porphyry died about the time of Diocletian's abdication. The life of his maſter Plotinus, which he compoſed, will give us the moſt complete idea of the genius of the ſect, and the manners of its profeſſors. This very curious piece is inſerted in Fabricius, Bibliotheca Græca, tom. iv. p. 88—148.

and

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and intenſe application; but by miſtaking the true object of philoſophy, their labours contributed much leſs to improve than to corrupt the human underſtanding. The knowledge that is ſuited to our ſituation and powers, the whole compaſs of moral, natural, and mathematical ſcience, was neglected by the new Platoniſts; whilſt they exhauſted their ſtrength in the verbal diſputes of metaphyſics, attempted to explore the ſecrets of the inviſible world, and ſtudied to reconcile Ariſtotle with Plato, on ſubjects of which both theſe philoſophers were as ignorant as the reſt of mankind. Conſuming their reaſon in theſe deep but unſubſtantial meditations, their minds were expoſed to illuſions of fancy. They flattered themſelves that they poſſeſſed the ſecret of diſengaging the ſoul from its corporeal priſon; claimed a familiar intercourſe with dæmons and ſpirits; and, by a very ſingular revolution, converted the ſtudy of philoſophy into that of magic. The ancient ſages had derided the popular ſuperſtition; after diſguiſing its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the diſciples of Plotinus and Porphyry became its moſt zealous defenders. As they agreed with the Chriſtians in a few myſterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological ſyſtem with all the fury of civil war. The new Platoniſts would ſcarcely deſerve a place in the hiſtory of ſcience, but in that of the church the mention of them will very frequently occur.

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Troubles after the Abdication of Diocletian.—Death of Conſtantius.—Elevation of Conſtantine and Maxentius.—Six Emperors at the ſame Time.—Death of Maximian and Galerius.—Victories of Conſtantine over Maxentius and Licinius.—Re-union of the Empire under the Authority of Conſtantine.

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Period of civil wars and confuſion. A. D. 305—323.

THE balance of power eſtabliſhed by Diocletian ſubſiſted no longer than while it was ſuſtained by the firm and dexterous hand of the founder. It required ſuch a fortunate mixture of different tempers and abilities, as could ſcarcely be found or even expected a ſecond time; two emperors without jealouſy, two Cæſars without ambition, and the ſame general intereſt invariably purſued by four independent princes. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian was ſucceeded by eighteen years of diſcord and confuſion. The empire was afflicted by five civil wars; and the remainder of the time was not ſo much a ſtate of tranquillity as a ſuſpenſion of arms between ſeveral hoſtile monarchs, who, viewing each other with an eye of fear and hatred, ſtrove to increaſe their reſpective forces at the expence of their ſubjects.

Character and ſituation of Conſtantius.

As ſoon as Diocletian and Maximian had reſigned the purple, their ſtation, according to the rules of the new conſtitution, was filled by the two Cæſars, Conſtantius and Galerius, who immediately aſſumed the title of Auguſtus [1]. The honours of ſeniority

[1] M. de Monteſquieu (Conſiderations ſur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. 17.) ſuppoſes, on the authority of Oroſius and Euſebius, that, on this occaſion, the empire, for the firſt time, was *really* divided into two parts. It is difficult, however, to diſcover in what reſpect the plan of Galerius differed from that of Diocletian.

and

and precedence were allowed to the former of thoſe princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to adminiſter his ancient department of Gaul, Spain, and Britain. The government of thoſe ample provinces was ſufficient to exerciſe his talents, and to ſatisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation, diſtinguiſhed the amiable character of Conſtantius, and his fortunate ſubjects had frequently occaſion to compare the virtues of their ſovereign with the paſſions of Maximian, and even with the arts of Diocletian [2]. Inſtead of imitating their eaſtern pride and magnificence, Conſtantius preſerved the modeſty of a Roman prince. He declared, with unaffected ſincerity, that his moſt valued treaſure was in the hearts of his people, and that, whenever the dignity of the throne, or the danger of the ſtate, required any extraordinary ſupply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality [3]. The provincials of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, ſenſible of his worth and of their own happineſs, reflected with anxiety on the declining health of the emperor Conſtantius, and the tender age of his numerous family, the iſſue of his ſecond marriage with the daughter of Maximian.

Of Galerius.

The ſtern temper of Galerius was caſt in a very different mould; and while he commanded the eſteem of his ſubjects, he ſeldom condeſcended to ſolicit their affections. His fame in arms, and above all, the ſucceſs of the Perſian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a ſuperior, or even of an equal. If it were poſſible to rely on the partial teſtimony of an injudicious

[2] Hic non modo amabilis, ſed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit; præcipue quòd Diocletiani ſuſpectam prudentiam, et Maximiani ſanguinariam violentiam imperio ejus evaſerant. Eutrop. Breviar. x. 1.

[3] Divitiis Provincialium (mel. *provinciarum)* ac privatorum ſtudens, fiſci commoda non admodum affectans; ducenſque melius publicas opes a privatis haberi, quam intra unum clauſtrum reſervari. Id. ibid. He carried this maxim ſo far, that whenever he gave an entertainment, he was obliged to borrow a ſervice of plate.

writer,

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writer, we might aſcribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a *private* converſation between the two princes, in which the former diſcovered as much puſillanimity as the latter diſplayed ingratitude and arrogance[4]. But theſe obſcure anecdotes are ſufficiently refuted by an impartial view of the character and conduct of Diocletian. Whatever might otherwiſe have been his intentions, if he had apprehended any danger from the violence of Galerius, his good ſenſe would have inſtructed him to prevent the ignominious conteſt; and as he had held the ſceptre with glory, he would have reſigned it without diſgrace.

The two Cæſars, Severus and Maximin.

After the elevation of Conſtantius and Galerius to the rank of *Auguſti*, two new *Cæſars* were required to ſupply their place, and to complete the ſyſtem of the Imperial government. Diocletian was ſincerely deſirous of withdrawing himſelf from the world; he conſidered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmeſt ſupport of his family and of the empire; and he conſented, without reluctance, that his ſucceſſor ſhould aſſume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It was fixed without conſulting the intereſt or inclination of the princes of the Weſt. Each of them had a ſon who was arrived at the age of manhood, and who might have been deemed the moſt natural candidates for the vacant honour. But the impotent reſentment of Maximian was no longer to be dreaded; and the moderate Conſtantius, though he might deſpiſe the dangers, was humanely apprehenſive of the calamities of civil war. The two perſons whom Galerius promoted to the rank of Cæſar, were much better ſuited to ſerve the views of his ambition; and their prin-

[4] Lactantius de Mort. Perſecutor. c. 18. Were the particulars of this conference more conſiſtent with truth and decency, we might ſtill aſk, how they came to the knowledge of an obſcure rhetorician? But there are many hiſtorians who put us in mind of the admirable ſaying of the great Condè to cardinal de Retz; "Ces coquins nous font parler et agir, "comme ils auroient fait eux-memes à notre "place."

cipal recommendation ſeems to have conſiſted in the want of merit or perſonal conſequence. The firſt of theſe was Daza, or, as he was afterwards called, Maximin, whoſe mother was the ſiſter of Galerius. The unexperienced youth ſtill betrayed by his manners and language his ruſtic education, when, to his own aſtoniſhment as well as that of the world, he was inveſted by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of Cæſar, and intruſted with the ſovereign command of Egypt and Syria[5]. At the ſame time, Severus, a faithful ſervant, addicted to pleaſure, but not incapable of buſineſs, was ſent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Maximian the Cæſarean ornaments, and the poſſeſſion of Italy and Africa[6]. According to the forms of the conſtitution, Severus acknowledged the ſupremacy of the weſtern emperor; but he was abſolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reſerving to himſelf the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to thoſe of Syria, firmly eſtabliſhed his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence, that the approaching death of Conſtantius would leave him ſole maſter of the Roman world, we are aſſured that he had arranged in his mind a long ſucceſſion of future princes, and that he meditated his own retreat from public life, after he ſhould have accompliſhed a glorious reign of about twenty years[7].

Ambition of Galerius diſappointed by two revolutions.

But within leſs than eighteen months, two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious ſchemes of Galerius. The hopes of uniting the weſtern provinces to his empire, were diſappointed by the elevation of Conſtantine, whilſt Italy and Africa were loſt by the ſucceſsful revolt of Maxentius.

[5] Sublatus nuper a pecoribus et ſilvis (ſays Lactantius de M. P. c. 19.) ſtatim Scutarius, continuo Protector, mox Tribunus, poſtridie Cæſar, accepit Orientem. Aurelius Victor is too liberal in giving him the whole portion of Diocletian.

[6] His diligence and fidelity are acknowledged even by Lactantius, de M. P. c. 18.

[7] Theſe ſchemes, however, reſt only on the very doubtful authority of Lactantius, de M. P. c. 20.

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Birth, education, and eſcape of Conſtantine. A. D. 274.

I. The fame of Conſtantine has rendered poſterity attentive to the moſt minute circumſtances of his life and actions. The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, have been the ſubject not only of literary but of national diſputes. Notwithſtanding the recent tradition, which aſſigns for her father, a Britiſh king, we are obliged to confeſs, that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper[8]; but at the ſame time we may defend the legality of her marriage, againſt thoſe who have repreſented her as the concubine of Conſtantius[9]. The great Conſtantine was moſt probably born at Naiſſus, in Dacia[10]; and it is not ſurpriſing, that in a family and province diſtinguiſhed only by the profeſſion of arms, the youth ſhould diſcover very little inclination to improve his

[8] This tradition, unknown to the contemporaries of Conſtantine, was invented in the darkneſs of monaſteries, was embelliſhed by Jeffrey of Monmouth, and the writers of the xiith century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the laſt age, and is ſeriouſly related in the ponderous hiſtory of England, compiled by Mr. Carte (vol. i. p. 147.). He tranſports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Eſſex to the wall of Antoninus.

[9] Eutropius (x. 2.) expreſſes, in a few words, the real truth, and the occaſion of the error, "*ex obſcuriori matrimonio* ejus filius." Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 78.) eagerly ſeized the moſt unfavourable report, and is followed by Oroſius (vii. 25.), whoſe authority is oddly enough overlooked by the indefatigable but partial Tillemont. By inſiſting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged her marriage.

[10] There are three opinions with regard to the place of Conſtantine's birth. 1. Our Engliſh antiquarians were uſed to dwell with rapture on the words of his panegyriſt; "Britannias illic oriendo nobiles feciſti." But this celebrated paſſage may be referred with as much propriety to the acceſſion as to the nativity of Conſtantine. 2. Some of the modern Greeks have aſcribed the honour of his birth to Drepanum, a town on the gulf of Nicomedia (Cellarius, tom. ii. p. 174.), which Conſtantine dignified with the name of Helenopolis, and Juſtinian adorned with many ſplendid buildings (Procop. de Ædificiis v. 2.). It is indeed probable enough, that Helena's father kept an inn at Drepanum; and that Conſtantius might lodge there when he returned from a Perſian embaſſy in the reign of Aurelian. But in the wandering life of a ſoldier, the place of his marriage, and the places where his children are born, have very little connection with each other. 3. The claim of Naiſſus is ſupported by the anonymous writer, publiſhed at the end of Ammianus, p. 710, and who in general copied very good materials; and it is confirmed by Julius Firmicius (de Aſtrologiâ, l. i. c. 4.), who flouriſhed under the reign of Conſtantine himſelf. Some objections have been raiſed againſt the integrity of the text, and the application of the paſſage of Firmicius; but the former is eſtabliſhed by the beſt MSS. and the latter is very ably defended by Lipſius de Magnitudine Romana, l. iv. c. 11. et Supplement.

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A. D. 292.

mind by the acquiſition of knowledge [11]. He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæſar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the ſplendour of an Imperial alliance reduced the ſon of Helena to a ſtate of diſgrace and humiliation. Inſtead of following Conſtantius in the Weſt, he remained in the ſervice of Diocletian, ſignalized his valour in the wars of Egypt and Perſia, and gradually roſe to the honourable ſtation of a tribune of the firſt order. The figure of Conſtantius was tall and majeſtic; he was dexterous in all his exerciſes, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct, the active ſpirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and while his mind was engroſſed by ambition, he appeared cold and inſenſible to the allurements of pleaſure. The favour of the people and ſoldiers, who had named him as a worthy candidate for the rank of Cæſar, ſerved only to exaſperate the jealouſy of Galerius; and though prudence might reſtrain him from exerciſing any open violence, an abſolute monarch is ſeldom at a loſs how to execute a ſure and ſecret revenge [12]. Every hour increaſed the danger of Conſtantine, and the anxiety of his father, who, by repeated letters, expreſſed the warmeſt deſire of embracing his ſon. For ſome time the policy of Galerius ſupplied him with delays and excuſes, but it was impoſſible long to refuſe ſo natural a requeſt of his aſſociate, without maintaining his refuſal by arms. The permiſſion of the journey was reluctantly granted, and whatever precautions the emperor might have taken to intercept a return, the conſequences of which, he, with ſo much reaſon, apprehended, they were effectually diſappointed by the incredible diligence of

[11] Literis minus inſtructus. Anonym. ad Ammian. p. 710.

[12] Galerius, or perhaps his own courage, expoſed him to ſingle combat with a Sarmatian (Anonym. p. 710.) and with a monſtrous lion. See Praxagoras apud Photium, p. 63. Praxagoras, an Athenian philoſopher, had written a life of Conſtantine, in two books, which are now loſt. He was a contemporary.

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Conſtantine [13]. Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night, he travelled poſt through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul, and amidſt the joyful acclamations of the people, reached the port of Boulogne, in the very moment when his father was preparing to embark for Britain [14].

Death of Conſtantius, and elevation of Conſtantine. A. D. 306. July 25.

The Britiſh expedition, and an eaſy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia, were the laſt exploits of the reign of Conſtantius. He ended his life in the Imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had received the title of Auguſtus, and almoſt fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæſar. His death was immediately ſucceeded by the elevation of Conſtantine. The ideas of inheritance and ſucceſſion are ſo very familiar, that the generality of mankind conſider them as founded, not only in reaſon, but in nature itſelf. Our imagination readily transfers the ſame principles from private property to public dominion: and whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a ſon whoſe merit ſeems to juſtify the eſteem, or even the hopes of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irreſiſtible weight. The flower of the weſtern armies had followed Conſtantius into Britain, and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Alemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary chieftains [15]. The opinion of their own importance, and the aſſurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain would acquieſce in their nomination, were diligently inculcated to the legions by the adherents

[13] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 78, 79. Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. The former tells a very fooliſh ſtory, that Conſtantine cauſed all the poſt-horſes, which he had uſed, to be hamſtrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a purſuit, would have ſcattered ſuſpicions, and might have ſtopped his journey.

[14] Anonym. p. 710. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 4. But Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 79. Euſebius de Vit. Conſtant. l. i. c. 21. and Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. ſuppoſe, with leſs accuracy, that he found his father on his death-bed.

[15] Cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, ſed præcipue Croco *(alii Eroco)* Alamannorum Rege, auxilii gratiâ Conſtantium comitato, imperium capit. Victor Junior, c. 41. This is perhaps the firſt inſtance of a barbarian king, who aſſiſted the Roman arms with an independent body of his own ſubjects. The practice grew familiar, and at laſt became fatal.

of

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of Conſtantine. The ſoldiers were aſked, Whether they could heſitate a moment between the honour of placing at their head the worthy ſon of their beloved emperor, and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of ſome obſcure ſtranger, on whom it might pleaſe the ſovereign of Aſia to beſtow the armies and provinces of the Weſt. It was inſinuated to them, that gratitude and liberality held a diſtinguiſhed place among the virtues of Conſtantine; nor did that artful prince ſhew himſelf to the troops, till they were prepared to ſalute him with the names of Auguſtus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his deſires; and had he been leſs actuated by ambition, it was his only means of ſafety. He was well acquainted with the character and ſentiments of Galerius, and ſufficiently apprized, that if he wiſhed to live he muſt determine to reign. The decent and even obſtinate reſiſtance which he choſe to affect [16], was contrived to juſtify his uſurpation; nor did he yield to the acclamations of the army, till he had provided the proper materials for a letter, which he immediately diſpatched to the emperor of the Eaſt. Conſtantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modeſtly aſſerted his natural claim to the ſucceſſion, and reſpectfully lamented, that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to ſolicit the Imperial purple in the regular and conſtitutional manner. The firſt emotions of Galerius were thoſe of ſurpriſe, diſappointment, and rage; and as he could ſeldom reſtrain his paſſions, he loudly threatened, that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the meſſenger. But his reſentment inſenſibly ſubſided; and when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and ſtrength of his adverſary, he conſented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Conſtantine had left open to him.

He is acknowledged by Galerius, who gives him only the title of Cæſar, and that of Auguſtus to Severus.

[16] His panegyriſt Eumenius (vii. 8.) ventures to affirm, in the preſence of Conſtantine, that he put ſpurs to his horſe, and tried, but in vain, to eſcape from the hands of his ſoldiers.

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him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the Britiſh army, Galerius accepted the ſon of his deceaſed colleague, as the ſovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæſar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, whilſt he conferred the vacant place of Auguſtus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was ſtill preſerved, and Conſtantine, who already poſſeſſed the ſubſtance, expected, without impatience, an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of ſupreme power[17].

The brothers and ſiſters of Conſtantine.

The children of Conſtantius by his ſecond marriage were ſix in number, three of either ſex, and whoſe Imperial deſcent might have ſolicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the ſon of Helena. But Conſtantine was in the thirty-ſecond year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the time when the eldeſt of his brothers could not poſſibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of ſuperior merit had been allowed and ratified by the dying emperor[18]. In his laſt moments, Conſtantius bequeathed to his eldeſt ſon the care of the ſafety as well as greatneſs of the family; conjuring him to aſſume both the authority and the ſentiments of a father with regard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the ſecure dignity of their lives, and the firſt honours of the ſtate with which they were inveſted, atteſt the fraternal affection of Conſtantine; and as thoſe princes poſſeſſed a mild and grateful diſpoſition, they ſubmitted without reluctance to the ſuperiority of his genius and fortune[19].

[17] Lactantius de M. P. c. 25. Eumenius (vii. 8.) gives a rhetorical turn to the whole tranſaction.

[18] The choice of Conſtantine, by his dying father, which is warranted by reaſon, and inſinuated by Eumenius, ſeems to be confirmed by the moſt unexceptionable authority, the concurring evidence of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 24.) and of Libanius (Oration i.); of Euſebius (in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 18. 21.) and of Julian (Oration i.).

[19] Of the three ſiſters of Conſtantine, Conſtantia married the emperor Licinius, Anaſtaſia the Cæſar Baſſianus, and Eutropia the conſul Nepotianus. The three brothers were, Dalmatius, Julius Conſtantius, and Annibalianus, of whom we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter.

II. The

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Diſcontent of the Romans at the apprehenſion of taxes.

II. The ambitious ſpirit of Galerius was ſcarcely reconciled to the diſappointment of his views upon the Gallic provinces, before the unexpected loſs of Italy wounded his pride as well as power in a ſtill more ſenſible part. The long abſence of the emperors had filled Rome with diſcontent and indignation; and the people gradually diſcovered, that the preference given to Nicomedia and Milan, was not to be aſcribed to the particular inclination of Diocletian, but to the permanent form of government which he had inſtituted. It was in vain that, a few months after his abdication, his ſucceſſors dedicated, under his name, thoſe magnificent baths, whoſe ruins ſtill ſupply the ground as well as the materials for ſo many churches and convents[20]. The tranquillity of thoſe elegant receſſes of eaſe and luxury was diſturbed by the impatient murmurs of the Romans; and a report was inſenſibly circulated, that the ſums expended in erecting thoſe buildings, would ſoon be required at their hands. About that time the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigencies of the ſtate, had induced him to make a very ſtrict and rigorous inquiſition into the property of his ſubjects for the purpoſe of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their perſons. A very minute ſurvey appears to have been taken of their real eſtates; and wherever there was the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a ſincere declaration of their perſonal wealth[21]. The privileges which had exalted Italy above the rank of the provinces, were no longer regarded: and the officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to ſettle the pro-

[20] See Gruter Inſcrip. p. 178. The ſix princes are all mentioned, Diocletian and Maximian as the ſenior Auguſti and fathers of the emperors. They jointly dedicate, for the uſe of *their own* Romans, this magnificent edifice. The architects have delineated the ruins of theſe *Thermæ*; and the antiquarians, particularly Donatus and Nardini, have aſcertained the ground which they covered. One of the great rooms is now the Carthuſian church; and even one of the porter's lodges is ſufficient to form another church, which belongs to the Feuillans.

[21] See Lactantius de M. P. c. 26. 31.

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portion of the new taxes. Even when the ſpirit of freedom had been utterly extinguiſhed, the tameſt ſubjects have ſometimes ventured to reſiſt an unprecedented invaſion of their property; but on this occaſion the injury was aggravated by the inſult, and the ſenſe of private intereſt was quickened by that of national honour. The conqueſt of Macedonia, as we have already obſerved, had delivered the Roman people from the weight of perſonal taxes. Though they had experienced every form of deſpotiſm, they had now enjoyed that exemption near five hundred years; nor could they patiently brook the inſolence of an Illyrian peaſant, who, from his diſtant reſidence in Aſia, preſumed to number Rome among the tributary cities of his empire. The riſing fury of the people was encouraged by the authority, or at leaſt the connivance, of the ſenate; and the feeble remains of the Prætorian guards, who had reaſon to apprehend their own diſſolution, embraced ſo honourable a pretence, and declared their readineſs to draw their ſwords in the ſervice of their oppreſſed country. It was the wiſh, and it ſoon became the hope, of every citizen, that after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they ſhould elect a prince who, by the place of his reſidence, and by his maxims of government, might once more deſerve the title of Roman emperor. The name, as well as the ſituation, of Maxentius, determined in his favour the popular enthuſiaſm.

Maxentius declared emperor at Rome. A. D. 306. 28th Oct.

Maxentius was the ſon of the emperor Maximian, and he had married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance ſeemed to offer him the faireſt promiſe of ſucceeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the ſame excluſion from the dignity of Cæſar, which Conſtantine had deſerved by a dangerous ſuperiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred ſuch aſſociates, as would never diſgrace the choice, nor diſpute the commands of their benefactor. An obſcure ſtranger was therefore raiſed to the throne of Italy, and the ſon of the late emperor of the

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the Weſt was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles diſtant from the capital. The gloomy paſſions of his ſoul, ſhame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Conſtantine's ſucceſs; but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public diſcontent, and he was eaſily perſuaded to unite his perſonal injury and pretenſions with the cauſe of the Roman people. Two Prætorian tribunes and a commiſſary of proviſions undertook the management of the conſpiracy; and as every order of men was actuated by the ſame ſpirit, the immediate event was neither doubtful nor difficult. The præfect of the city, and a few magiſtrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were maſſacred by the guards; and Maxentius, inveſted with the Imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding ſenate and people as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity. It is uncertain whether Maximian was previouſly acquainted with the conſpiracy; but as ſoon as the ſtandard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to paſs a life of melancholy ſolitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the diſguiſe of paternal tenderneſs. At the requeſt of his ſon and of the ſenate, he condeſcended to re-aſſume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms, added ſtrength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius [22].

Maximian re-aſſumes the purple.

According to the advice, or rather the orders, of his colleague, the emperor Severus immediately haſtened to Rome, in the full confidence, that, by his unexpected celerity, he ſhould eaſily ſuppreſs the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found on his arrival the gates of the city ſhut

Defeat and death of Severus.

[22] The vith Panegyric repreſents the conduct of Maximian in the moſt favourable light; and the ambiguous expreſſion of Aurelius Victor, "retractante diu," may ſignify, either that he contrived, or that he oppoſed, the conſpiracy. See Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 79. and Lactantius de M. P. c. 26.

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againſt him, the walls filled with men and arms, an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without ſpirit or affection. A large body of Moors deſerted to the enemy, allured by the promiſe of a large donative; and, if it be true that they had been levied by Maximian in his African war, preferring the natural feelings of gratitude to the artificial ties of allegiance. Anulinus, the Prætorian præfect, declared himſelf in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him the moſt conſiderable part of the troops, accuſtomed to obey his commands. Rome, according to the expreſſion of an orator, recalled her armies; and the unfortunate Severus, deſtitute of force and of counſel, retired, or rather fled, with precipitation to Ravenna. Here he might for ſome time have been ſafe. The fortifications of Ravenna were able to reſiſt the attempts, and the moraſſes that ſurrounded the town were ſufficient to prevent the approach, of the Italian army. The ſea, which Severus commanded with a powerful fleet, ſecured him an inexhauſtible ſupply of proviſions, and gave a free entrance to the legions, which, on the return of ſpring, would advance to his aſſiſtance from Illyricum and the Eaſt. Maximian, who conducted the ſiege in perſon, was ſoon convinced that he might waſte his time and his army in the fruitleſs enterpriſe, and that he had nothing to hope either from force or famine. With an art more ſuitable to the character of Diocletian than to his own, he directed his attack, not ſo much againſt the walls of Ravenna, as againſt the mind of Severus. The treachery which he had experienced, diſpoſed that unhappy prince to diſtruſt the moſt ſincere of his friends and adherents. The emiſſaries of Maximian eaſily perſuaded his credulity, that a conſpiracy was formed to betray the town, and prevailed upon his fears not to expoſe himſelf to the diſcretion of an irritated conqueror, but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at firſt received with humanity, and treated with reſpect. Maximian conducted

ducted the captive emperor to Rome, and gave him the moſt ſolemn aſſurances that he had ſecured his life by the reſignation of the purple. But Severus could obtain only an eaſy death and an Imperial funeral. When the ſentence was ſigned to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice; he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins: and as ſoon as he expired, his body was carried to the ſepulchre which had been conſtructed for the family of Gallienus[23].

A. D. 307. February.

Though the characters of Conſtantine and Maxentius had very little affinity with each other, their ſituation and intereſt were the ſame; and prudence ſeemed to require that they ſhould unite their forces againſt the common enemy. Notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of his age and dignity, the indefatigable Maximian paſſed the Alps, and courting a perſonal interview with the ſovereign of Gaul, carried with him his daughter Fauſta as the pledge of the new alliance. The marriage was celebrated at Arles with every circumſtance of magnificence; and the ancient colleague of Diocletian, who again aſſerted his claim to the weſtern empire, conferred on his ſon-in-law and ally the title of Auguſtus. By conſenting to receive that honour from Maximian, Conſtantine ſeemed to embrace the cauſe of Rome and of the ſenate; but his profeſſions were ambiguous, and his aſſiſtance ſlow and ineffectual. He conſidered with attention the approaching conteſt between the maſters of Italy and the emperor of the Eaſt, and was prepared to conſult his own ſafety or ambition in the event of the war[24].

Maximian gives his daughter Fauſta, and the title of Auguſtus, to Conſtantine. A. D. 307. 31ſt March.

The importance of the occaſion called for the preſence and abilities of Galerius. At the head of a powerful army collected from

Galerius invades Italy.

[23] The circumſtances of this war, and the death of Severus, are very doubtfully and variouſly told in our ancient fragments (ſee Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 555.). I have endeavoured to extract from them a conſiſtent and probable narration.

[24] The vith Panegyric was pronounced to celebrate the elevation of Conſtantine; but the prudent orator avoids the mention either of Galerius or of Maxentius. He introduces only one ſlight alluſion to the actual troubles, and to the majeſty of Rome.

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Illyricum and the Eaſt, he entered Italy, reſolved to revenge the death of Severus, and to chaſtiſe the rebellious Romans; or, as he expreſſed his intentions, in the furious language of a barbarian, to extirpate the ſenate, and to deſtroy the people by the ſword. But the ſkill of Maximian had concerted a prudent ſyſtem of defence. The invader found every place hoſtile, fortified, and inacceſſible; and though he forced his way as far as Narni, within ſixty miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp. Senſible of the increaſing difficulties of his enterpriſe, the haughty Galerius made the firſt advances towards a reconciliation, and diſpatched two of his moſt conſiderable officers to tempt the Roman princes by the offer of a conference and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more from his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful chance of war[25]. The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmneſs, his perfidious friendſhip refuſed with contempt, and it was not long before he diſcovered, that, unleſs he provided for his ſafety by a timely retreat, he had ſome reaſon to apprehend the fate of Severus. The wealth, which the Romans defended againſt his rapacious tyranny, they freely contributed for his deſtruction. The name of Maximian, the popular arts of his ſon, the ſecret diſtribution of large ſums, and the promiſe of ſtill more liberal rewards, checked the ardour, and corrupted the fidelity of the Illyrian legions; and when Galerius at length gave the ſignal of the retreat, it was with ſome difficulty that he could prevail on his veterans not to deſert a banner which had ſo often conducted them to victory and honour. A contemporary writer aſſigns two other cauſes for the failure of the expedition; but they are both of ſuch a nature,

[25] With regard to this negotiation, ſee the fragments of an anonymous Hiſtorian, publiſhed by Valeſius at the end of his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 711. Theſe fragments have furniſhed us with ſeveral curious, and as it ſhould ſeem authentic, anecdotes.

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that a cautious hiſtorian will ſcarcely venture to adopt them. We are told that Galerius, who had formed a very imperfect notion of the greatneſs of Rome by the cities of the Eaſt, with which he was acquainted, found his forces inadequate to the ſiege of that immenſe capital. But the extent of a city ſerves only to render it more acceſſible to the enemy; Rome had long ſince been accuſtomed to ſubmit on the approach of a conqueror; nor could the temporary enthuſiaſm of the people have long contended againſt the diſcipline and valour of the legions. We are likewiſe informed, that the legions themſelves were ſtruck with horror and remorſe, and that thoſe pious ſons of the republic refuſed to violate the ſanctity of their venerable parent [26]. But when we recollect with how much eaſe, in the more ancient civil wars, the zeal of party, and the habits of military obedience had converted the native citizens of Rome into her moſt implacable enemies, we ſhall be inclined to diſtruſt this extreme delicacy of ſtrangers and barbarians, who had never beheld Italy, till they entered it in a hoſtile manner. Had they not been reſtrained by motives of a more intereſted nature, they would probably have anſwered Galerius in the words of Cæſar's veterans; "If our general wiſhes to lead us "to the banks of the Tyber, we are prepared to trace out his camp. "Whatſoever walls he has determined to level with the ground, "our hands are ready to work the engines: nor ſhall we heſitate, "ſhould the name of the devoted city be Rome itſelf." Theſe are indeed the expreſſions of a poet; but of a poet who has been diſtinguiſhed and even cenſured for his ſtrict adherence to the truth of hiſtory [27].

[26] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. The former of theſe reaſons is probably taken from Virgil's Shepherd; "Illam ego huic noſtræ ſimilem Melibœe putavi, &c." Lactantius delights in theſe poetical alluſions.

[27] Caſtra ſuper Tuſci ſi ponere Tybridis undas; *(jubeas)*
Heſperios audax veniam metator in agros.
Tu quoſcunque voles in planum effundere muros,
His aries actus diſperget ſaxa lacertis;
Illa licet penitus tolli quam juſſeris urbem
Roma ſit. Lucan. Pharſal. i. 381.

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His retreat.

The legions of Galerius exhibit a very melancholy proof of their diſpoſition, by the ravages which they committed in their retreat. They murdered, they raviſhed, they plundered, they drove away the flocks and herds of the Italians, they burnt the villages through which they paſſed, and they endeavoured to deſtroy the country which it had not been in their power to ſubdue. During the whole march, Maxentius hung on their rear, but he very prudently declined a general engagement with thoſe brave and deſperate veterans. His father had undertaken a ſecond journey into Gaul, with the hope of perſuading Conſtantine, who had aſſembled an army on the frontier, to join the purſuit and to complete the victory. But the actions of Conſtantine were guided by reaſon and not by reſentment. He perſiſted in the wiſe reſolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Galerius, when that aſpiring prince had ceaſed to be an object of terror[28].

Elevation of Licinius to the rank of Auguſtus; A. D. 307. Nov. 11.

The mind of Galerius was the moſt ſuſceptible of the ſterner paſſions, but it was not however incapable of a ſincere and laſting friendſhip. Licinius, whoſe manners as well as character were not unlike his own, ſeems to have engaged both his affection and eſteem. Their intimacy had commenced in the happier period perhaps of their youth and obſcurity. It had been cemented by the freedom and dangers of a military life; they had advanced, almoſt by equal ſteps, through the ſucceſſive honours of the ſervice; and as ſoon as Galerius was inveſted with the Imperial dignity, he ſeems to have conceived the deſign of raiſing his companion to the ſame rank with himſelf. During the ſhort period of his proſperity, he conſidered the rank of Cæſar as unworthy of the age and merit of Licinius, and rather choſe to reſerve for him

[28] Lactantius de M. P. c. 27. Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. The latter inſinuates, that Conſtantine, in his interview with Maximian, had promiſed to declare war againſt Galerius.

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the place of Conſtantius, and the empire of the Weſt. While the emperor was employed in the Italian war, he intruſted his friend with the defence of the Danube; and immediately after his return from that unfortunate expedition, he inveſted Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, reſigning to his immediate command the provinces of Illyricum[29]. The news of his promotion was no ſooner carried into the Eaſt, than Maximin, who governed, or rather oppreſſed, the countries of Egypt and Syria, betrayed his envy and diſcontent, diſdained the inferior name of Cæſar, and notwithſtanding the prayers as well as arguments of Galerius, exacted, almoſt by violence, the equal title of Auguſtus[30]. For the firſt, and indeed for the laſt time, the Roman world was adminiſtered by ſix emperors. In the Weſt, Conſtantine and Maxentius affected to reverence their father Maximian. In the Eaſt, Licinius and Maximin honoured with more real conſideration their benefactor Galerius. The oppoſition of intereſt, and the memory of a recent war, divided the empire into two great hoſtile powers; but their mutual fears produced an apparent tranquillity, and even a feigned reconciliation, till the death of the elder princes, of Maximian, and more particularly of Galerius, gave a new direction to the views and paſſions of their ſurviving aſſociates.

and of Maximin.

Six emperors. A. D. 308.

When Maximian had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philoſophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at leaſt encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotiſm, and gently cenſured that love of eaſe and retirement which had withdrawn him

Misfortunes of Maximian.

[29] M. de Tillemont (Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 559.) has proved, that Licinius, without paſſing through the intermediate rank of Cæſar, was declared Auguſtus, the 11th of November, A. D. 307, after the return of Galerius from Italy.

[30] Lactantius de M. P. c. 32. When Galerius declared Licinius Auguſtus with himſelf, he tried to ſatisfy his younger aſſociates, by inventing, for Conſtantine and *Maximin* (not *Maxentius*, ſee Baluze, p. 81.) the new title of ſons of the Auguſti. But when Maximin acquainted him that he had been ſaluted Auguſtus by the army, Galerius was obliged to acknowledge him, as well as Conſtantine, as equal aſſociates in the Imperial dignity.

from

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from the public ſervice[31]. But it was impoſſible, that minds like thoſe of Maximian and his ſon, could long poſſeſs in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius conſidered himſelf as the legal ſovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman ſenate and people; nor would he endure the controul of his father, who arrogantly declared, that by *his* name and abilities the raſh youth had been eſtabliſhed on the throne. The cauſe was ſolemnly pleaded before the Prætorian guards, and thoſe troops, who dreaded the ſeverity of the old emperor, eſpouſed the party of Maxentius[32]. The life and freedom of Maximian were however reſpected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his paſt conduct, and ſecretly contriving new miſchiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, ſoon obliged him to leave his dominions, and the laſt refuge of the diſappointed Maximian was the court of his ſon-in-law Conſtantine[33]. He was received with reſpect by that artful prince, and with the appearance of filial tenderneſs by the empreſs Fauſta. That he might remove every ſuſpicion, he reſigned the Imperial purple a ſecond time[34], profeſſing himſelf at length convinced of the vanity of greatneſs and ambition. Had he perſevered in this reſolution, he might have ended his life with leſs dignity indeed than in his firſt retirement, yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near proſpect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the ſtate from whence he was fallen, and he reſolved, by a deſperate effort, either to reign or to periſh.

[31] See Panegyr. Vet. vi. 9. Audi doloris noſtri liberam vocem, &c. The whole paſſage is imagined with artful flattery, and expreſſed with an eaſy flow of eloquence.

[32] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. A report was ſpread, that Maxentius was the ſon of ſome obſcure Syrian, and had been ſubſtituted by the wife of Maximian as her own child. See Aurelius Victor, Anonym. Valeſian. and Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3, 4.

[33] Ab urbe pulſum, ab Italia fugatum, ab Illyrico repudiatum, tuis provinciis, tuis copiis, tuo palatio recepiſti. Eumen. in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 14.

[34] Lactantius de M. P. c. 29. Yet after the reſignation of the purple, Conſtantine ſtill continued to Maximian the pomp and honours of the Imperial dignity; and on all public occaſions gave the right-hand place to his father-in-law. Panegyr. Vet. vii. 15.

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An incurſion of the Franks had ſummoned Conſtantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were ſtationed in the ſouthern provinces of Gaul, which lay expoſed to the enterpriſes of the Italian emperor, and a conſiderable treaſure was depoſited in the city of Arles. Maximian either craftily invented, or haſtily credited, a vain report of the death of Conſtantine. Without heſitation he aſcended the throne, ſeized the treaſure, and ſcattering it with his accuſtomed profuſion among the ſoldiers, endeavoured to awake in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could eſtabliſh his authority, or finiſh the negotiation which he appears to have entered into with his ſon Maxentius, the celerity of Conſtantine defeated all his hopes. On the firſt news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhine to the Saone, embarked on the laſt mentioned river at Chalons, and at Lyons truſting himſelf to the rapidity of the Rhone, arrived at the gates of Arles, with a military force which it was impoſſible for Maximian to reſiſt, and which ſcarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marſeilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the continent was fortified againſt the beſiegers, whilſt the ſea was open, either for the eſcape of Maximian, or for the ſuccours of Maxentius, if the latter ſhould chuſe to diſguiſe his invaſion of Gaul, under the honourable pretence of defending a diſtreſſed, or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehenſive of the fatal conſequences of delay, Conſtantine gave orders for an immediate aſſault; but the ſcaling-ladders were found too ſhort for the height of the walls, and Marſeilles might have ſuſtained as long a ſiege as it formerly did againſt the arms of Cæſar, if the garriſon, conſcious either of their fault or of their danger, had not purchaſed their pardon by delivering up the city and the perſon of Maximian. A ſecret but irrevocable ſentence of death was pronounced againſt the uſurper, he

His death. A. D. 310. February.

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he obtained only the ſame favour which he had indulged to Severus, and it was publiſhed to the world, that, oppreſſed by the remorſe of his repeated crimes, he ſtrangled himſelf with his own hands. After he had loſt the aſſiſtance, and diſdained the moderate counſels, of Diocletian, the ſecond period of his active life was a ſeries of public calamities and perſonal mortifications, which were terminated, in about three years, by an ignominious death. He deſerved his fate; but we ſhould find more reaſon to applaud the humanity of Conſtantine, if he had ſpared an old man, the benefactor of his father, and the father of his wife. During the whole of this melancholy tranſaction, it appears that Fauſta ſacrificed the ſentiments of nature to her conjugal duties[35].

Death of Galerius. A. D. 311. May.

The laſt years of Galerius were leſs ſhameful and unfortunate; and though he had filled with more glory the ſubordinate ſtation of Cæſar, than the ſuperior rank of Auguſtus, he preſerved, till the moment of his death, the firſt place among the princes of the Roman world. He ſurvived his retreat from Italy about four years, and wiſely relinquiſhing his views of univerſal empire, he devoted the remainder of his life to the enjoyment of pleaſure, and to the execution of ſome works of public utility, among which we may diſtinguiſh the diſcharging into the Danube the ſuperfluous waters of the lake Pelſo, and the cutting down the immenſe foreſts that encompaſſed it; an operation worthy of a monarch, ſince it gave an extenſive country to the agriculture of his Pannonian ſubjects[36]. His death was occaſioned by a

[35] Zoſim. l. ii. p. 82. Eumenius in Panegyr. Vet. vii. 16—21. The latter of theſe has undoubtedly repreſented the whole affair in the moſt favourable light for his ſovereign. Yet even from this partial narrative we may conclude, that the repeated clemency of Conſtantine, and the reiterated treaſons of Maximian, as they are deſcribed by Lactantius (de M. P. c. 29, 30.), and copied by the moderns, are deſtitute of any hiſtorical foundation.

[36] Aurelius Victor, c. 40. But that lake was ſituated on the Upper Pannonia, near the borders of Noricum; and the province of Valeria (a name which the wife of Galerius gave to the drained country) undoubtedly lay between the Drave and the Danube (Sextus Rufus, c. 9.). I ſhould therefore ſuſpect that Victor has confounded the lake Pelſo with the Volocean marches, or, as they are now called, the lake Sabaton. It is placed in the heart of Valeria, and its preſent extent is not leſs than 12 Hungarian miles (about 70 Engliſh) in length, and two in breadth. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 9.

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very painful and lingering diſorder. His body, ſwelled by an intemperate courſe of life to an unwieldy corpulence, was covered with ulcers, and devoured by innumerable ſwarms of thoſe inſects, who have given their name to a moſt loathſome diſeaſe[37]; but as Galerius had offended a very zealous and powerful party among his ſubjects, his ſufferings, inſtead of exciting their compaſſion, have been celebrated as the viſible effects of divine juſtice[38]. He had no ſooner expired in his palace of Nicomedia, than the two emperors who were indebted for their purple to his favour, began to collect their forces, with the intention either of diſputing, or of dividing, the dominions which he had left without a maſter. They were perſuaded however to deſiſt from the former deſign, and to agree in the latter. The provinces of Aſia fell to the ſhare of Maximin, and thoſe of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Helleſpont and the Thracian Boſphorus formed their mutual boundary, and the banks of thoſe narrow ſeas, which flowed in the midſt of the Roman world, were covered with ſoldiers, with arms, and with fortifications. The deaths of Maximian and of Galerius reduced the number of emperors to four. The ſenſe of their true intereſt ſoon connected Licinius and Conſtantine; a ſecret alliance was concluded between Maximin and Maxentius, and their unhappy ſubjects expected with terror the bloody conſequences of their inevitable diſſenſions, which were no longer reſtrained by the fear or the reſpect which they had entertained for Galerius[39].

His dominion ſhared between Maximin and Licinius.

Among ſo many crimes and misfortunes occaſioned by the paſſions of the Roman princes, there is ſome pleaſure in diſcovering a

Adminiſtration of Conſtantine in Gaul. A. D. 306—312.

[37] Lactantius (de M. P. c. 33.) and Euſebius (l. viii. c. 16.) deſcribe the ſymptoms and progreſs of his diſorder with ſingular accuracy and apparent pleaſure.

[38] If any (like the late Dr. Jortin, Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 307—356.) ſtill delight in recording the wonderful deaths of the perſecutors, I would recommend to their peruſal an admirable paſſage of Grotius (Hiſt. l. vii. p. 332.) concerning the laſt illneſs of Philip II. of Spain.

[39] See Euſebius, l. ix. 6. 10. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Zoſimus is leſs exact, and evidently confounds Maximian with Maximin.

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ſingle action which may be aſcribed to their virtue. In the ſixth year of his reign, Conſtantine viſited the city of Autun, and generouſly remitted the arrears of tribute, reducing at the ſame time the proportion of their aſſeſſment, from twenty-five to eighteen thouſand heads, ſubject to the real and perſonal capitation [40]. Yet even this indulgence affords the moſt unqueſtionable proof of the public miſery. This tax was ſo extremely oppreſſive, either in itſelf or in the mode of collecting it, that whilſt the revenue was increaſed by extortion, it was diminiſhed by deſpair: a conſiderable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated; and great numbers of the provincials rather choſe to live as exiles and outlaws, than to ſupport the weight of civil ſociety. It is but too probable, that the bountiful emperor relieved, by a partial act of liberality, one among the many evils which he had cauſed by his general maxims of adminiſtration. But even thoſe maxims were leſs the effect of choice than of neceſſity. And if we except the death of Maximian, the reign of Conſtantine in Gaul ſeems to have been the moſt innocent and even virtuous period of his life. The provinces were protected by his preſence from the inroads of the barbarians, who either dreaded or experienced his active valour. After a ſignal victory over the Franks and Alemanni, ſeveral of their princes were expoſed by his order to the wild beaſts in the amphitheatre of Treves, and the people ſeem to have enjoyed the ſpectacle, without diſcovering, in ſuch a treatment of royal captives, any thing that was repugnant to the laws of nations or of humanity [41].

Tyranny of Maxentius in Italy and Africa. A. D. 306—312.

The virtues of Conſtantine were rendered more illuſtrious by the vices of Maxentius. Whilſt the Gallic provinces enjoyed as much

[40] See the viiith Panegyr. in which Eumenius diſplays, in the preſence of Conſtantine, the miſery and the gratitude of the city of Autun.

[41] Eutropius, x. 3. Panegyr. Veter. vii. 10, 11, 12. A great number of the French youth were likewiſe expoſed to the ſame cruel and ignominious death.

happineſs as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa groaned under the dominion of a tyrant as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction has indeed too frequently ſacrificed the reputation of the vanquiſhed to the glory of their ſucceſsful rivals; but even thoſe writers who have revealed, with the moſt freedom and pleaſure, the faults of Conſtantine, unanimouſly confeſs, that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate[42]. He had the good fortune to ſuppreſs a ſlight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adherents had been guilty; the province ſuffered for their crime. The flouriſhing cities of Cirtha and Carthage, and the whole extent of that fertile country, were waſted by fire and ſword. The abuſe of victory was followed by the abuſe of law and juſtice. A formidable army of ſycophants and delators invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were eaſily convicted of a connexion with the rebels; and thoſe among them who experienced the emperor's clemency, were only puniſhed by the confiſcation of their eſtates[43]. So ſignal a victory was celebrated by a magnificent triumph, and Maxentius expoſed to the eyes of the people the ſpoils and captives of a Roman province. The ſtate of the capital was no leſs deſerving of compaſſion than that of Africa. The wealth of Rome ſupplied an inexhauſtible fund for his vain and prodigal expences, and the miniſters of his revenue were ſkilled in the arts of rapine. It was under his reign that the method of exacting a *free gift* from the ſenators was firſt invented; and as the ſum was inſenſibly increaſed, the pretences of levying it, a victory, a birth, a marriage, or an Imperial conſulſhip, were proportionably multiplied[44]. Maxentius

[42] Julian excludes Maxentius from the banquet of the Cæſars with abhorrence and contempt; and Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 85.) accuſes him of every kind of cruelty and profligacy.

[43] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 83—85. Aurelius Victor.

[44] The paſſage of Aurelius Victor ſhould be read in the following manner. Primus inſtituto peſſimo, *munerum* ſpecie, Patres *Oratoreſque* pecuniam conferre prodigenti ſibi cogeret.

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had imbibed the ſame implacable averſion to the ſenate, which had characterized moſt of the former tyrants of Rome: nor was it poſſible for his ungrateful temper to forgive the generous fidelity which had raiſed him to the throne, and ſupported him againſt all his enemies. The lives of the ſenators were expoſed to his jealous ſuſpicions, the diſhonour of their wives and daughters heightened the gratification of his ſenſual paſſions[45]. It may be preſumed, that an Imperial lover was ſeldom reduced to ſigh in vain; but whenever perſuaſion proved ineffectual, he had recourſe to violence; and there remains *one* memorable example of a noble matron, who preſerved her chaſtity by a voluntary death. The ſoldiers were the only order of men whom he appeared to reſpect, or ſtudied to pleaſe. He filled Rome and Italy with armed troops, connived at their tumults, ſuffered them with impunity to plunder, and even to maſſacre, the defenceleſs people[46]; and indulging them in the ſame licentiouſneſs which their emperor enjoyed, Maxentius often beſtowed on his military favourites the ſplendid villa, or the beautiful wife, of a ſenator. A prince of ſuch a character, alike incapable of governing either in peace or in war, might purchaſe the ſupport, but he could never obtain the eſteem, of the army. Yet his pride was equal to his other vices. Whilſt he paſſed his indolent life, either within the walls of his palace, or in the neighbouring gardens of Salluſt, he was repeatedly heard to declare, that *he alone* was emperor, and that the other princes were no more than his lieutenants, on whom he had devolved the defence of the frontier provinces, that he might enjoy without inter-

[45] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. viii. 14. et in Vit. Conſtant. i. 33, 34. Rufinus, c. 17. The virtuous matron, who ſtabbed herſelf to eſcape the violence of Maxentius, was a Chriſtian, wife to the præfect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It ſtill remains a queſtion among the caſuiſts, whether, on ſuch occaſions, ſuicide is juſtifiable.

[46] Prætorianis cædem vulgi quondam annueret, is the vague expreſſion of Aurelius Victor. See more particular, though ſomewhat different, accounts of a tumult and maſſacre, which happened at Rome, in Euſebius (l. viii. c. 14.) and in Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 84.).

ruption

ruption the elegant luxury of the capital. Rome, which had ſo long regretted the abſence, lamented, during the ſix years of his reign, the preſence of her ſovereign [47].

Civil war between Conſtantine and Maxentius. A. D. 312.

Though Conſtantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the ſituation of the Romans with compaſſion, we have no reaſon to preſume that he would have taken up arms to puniſh the one, or to relieve the other. But the tyrant of Italy raſhly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy, whoſe ambition had been hitherto reſtrained by conſiderations of prudence, rather than by principles of juſtice [48]. After the death of Maximian, his titles, according to the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, had been eraſed, and his ſtatues thrown down with ignominy. His ſon, who had perſecuted and deſerted him when alive, affected to diſplay the moſt pious regard for his memory, and gave orders that a ſimilar treatment ſhould be immediately inflicted on all the ſtatues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Conſtantine. That wiſe prince, who ſincerely wiſhed to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was ſufficiently acquainted, at firſt diſſembled the inſult, and ſought for redreſs by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced, that the hoſtile and ambitious deſigns of the Italian emperor made it neceſſary for him to arm in his own defence. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretenſions to the whole monarchy of the Weſt, had already prepared a very conſiderable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the ſide of Rhætia; and though he could not expect any aſſiſtance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyri-

[47] See in the Panegyrics (ix. 14.), a lively deſcription of the indolence and vain pride of Maxentius. In another place, the orator obſerves, that the riches which Rome had accumulated in a period of 1060 years, were laviſhed by the tyrant on his mercenary bands; redemptis ad civile latrocinium manibus ingeſſerat.

[48] After the victory of Conſtantine, it was univerſally allowed, that the motive of delivering the republic from a deteſted tyrant, would, at any time, have juſtified his expedition into Italy. Euſeb. in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 26. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2.

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cum, allured by his preſents and promiſes, would deſert the ſtandard of that prince, and unanimouſly declare themſelves his ſoldiers and ſubjects [49]. Conſtantine no longer heſitated. He had deliberated with caution, he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambaſſadors, who, in the name of the ſenate and people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a deteſted tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonſtrances of his council, he reſolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy [50].

Preparations.

The enterpriſe was as full of danger as of glory; and the unſucceſsful event of two former invaſions was ſufficient to inſpire the moſt ſerious apprehenſions. The veteran troops who revered the name of Maximian, had embraced in both thoſe wars the party of his ſon, and were now reſtrained by a ſenſe of honour, as well as of intereſt, from entertaining an idea of a ſecond deſertion. Maxentius, who conſidered the Prætorian guards as the firmeſt defence of his throne, had increaſed them to their ancient eſtabliſhment; and they compoſed, including the reſt of the Italians who were inliſted into his ſervice, a formidable body of fourſcore thouſand men. Forty thouſand Moors and Carthaginians had been raiſed ſince the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furniſhed its proportion of troops; and the armies of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and ſeventy thouſand foot, and eighteen thouſand horſe. The wealth of Italy ſupplied the expences of the war; and the adjacent provinces were exhauſted, to form immenſe magazines of corn and every other kind of proviſions. The whole force of Conſtantine

[49] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 84, 85. Nazarius in Panegyr. x. 7—13.

[50] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 2. Omnibus fere tuis Comitibus et Ducibus non ſolum tacite muſſantibus, ſed etiam aperte timentibus; contra conſilia hominum, contra Haruſpicum monita, ipſe per temet liberandæ urbis tempus veniſſe ſentires. The embaſſy of the Romans is mentioned only by Zonaras (*l.* xiii.) and by Cedrenus (in Compend. Hiſt. p. 270.): but thoſe modern Greeks had the opportunity of conſulting many writers which have ſince been loſt, among which we may reckon the life of Conſtantine by Praxagoras. Photius (p. 63.) has made a ſhort extract from that hiſtorical work.

conſiſted

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consisted of ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse [51]; and as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the absence of the emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unless he sacrificed the public safety to his private quarrel [52]. At the head of about forty thousand soldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whose numbers were at least four times superior to his own. But the armies of Rome, placed at a secure distance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome, they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly composed of veterans who had almost forgotten, or of new levies, who had never acquired, the use of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians of the North; and in the performance of that laborious service, their valour was exercised and their discipline confirmed. There appeared the same difference between the leaders as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conquest; but these aspiring hopes soon gave way to the habits of pleasure and the consciousness of his inexperience. The intrepid mind of Constantine had been trained from his earliest youth to war, to action, and to military command.

Constantine passes the Alps.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, first, to discover, and then to open, a way over mountains and through savage nations, that had never yielded a passage to a regular

[51] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 86.) has given us this curious account of the forces on both sides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are assured (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 25.) that the war was carried on by sea as well as by land; and that the fleet of Constantine took possession of Sardinia, Corsica, and the ports of Italy.

[52] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 3. It is not surprising that the orator should diminish the numbers with which his sovereign atchieved the conquest of Italy; but it appears somewhat singular, that he should esteem the tyrant's army at no more than 100,000 men.

army.

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army[53]. The Alps were then guarded by nature, they are now fortified by art. Citadels conſtructed with no leſs ſkill than labour and expence, command every avenue into the plain, and on that ſide render Italy almoſt inacceſſible to the enemies of the king of Sardinia[54]. But in the courſe of the intermediate period, the generals, who have attempted the paſſage, have ſeldom experienced any difficulty or reſiſtance. In the age of Conſtantine, the peaſants of the mountains were civilized and obedient ſubjects; the country was plentifully ſtocked with proviſions, and the ſtupendous highways which the Romans had carried over the Alps, opened ſeveral communications between Gaul and Italy[55]. Conſtantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mount Cenis, and led his troops with ſuch active diligence, that he deſcended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. The city of Suſa, however, which is ſituated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was ſurrounded with walls, and provided with a garriſon ſufficiently numerous to check the progreſs of an invader; but the impatience of Conſtantine's troops diſdained the tedious forms of a ſiege. The ſame day that they appeared before Suſa, they applied fire to the gates, and ladders to the walls; and mounting to the aſſault amidſt a ſhower of ſtones and arrows, they entered the place ſword in hand, and cut in pieces the greateſt part of the garriſon. The flames were extinguiſhed by the care of

[53] The three principal paſſages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy, are thoſe of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition, and a reſemblance of names (*Alpes Penninæ*), had aſſigned the firſt of theſe for the march of Hannibal (ſee Simler de Alpibus). The Chevalier de Folard (Polybe, tom. iv.) and M. d'Anville have led him over Mount Genevre. But notwithſtanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretenſions of Mount Cenis are ſupported in a ſpecious, not to ſay a convincing, manner by M. Groſley. Obſervations ſur l'Italie, tom. i. p. 40, &c.

[54] La Brunette near Suſe, Demont, Exiles, Feneſtrelles, Coni, &c.

[55] See Ammian. Marcellin. xv. 10. His deſcription of the roads over the Alps, is clear, lively, and accurate.

Conſtantine,

Conſtantine, and the remains of Suſa preſerved from total deſtruction. About forty miles from thence, a more ſevere conteſt awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was aſſembled under the lieutenants of Maxentius in the plains of Turin. Its principal ſtrength conſiſted in a ſpecies of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, ſince the decline of their diſcipline, had borrowed from the nations of the Eaſt. The horſes, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aſpect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almoſt irreſiſtible; and as, on this occaſion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a ſharp point, and with ſpreading flanks, they flattered themſelves that they ſhould eaſily break and trample down the army of Conſtantine. They might perhaps have ſucceeded in their deſign, had not their experienced adverſary embraced the ſame method of defence, which in ſimilar circumſtances had been practiſed by Aurelian. The ſkilful evolutions of Conſtantine divided and baffled this maſſy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confuſion towards Turin; and as the gates of the city were ſhut againſt them, very few eſcaped the ſword of the victorious purſuers. By this important ſervice, Turin deſerved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the Imperial palace of Milan, and almoſt all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Conſtantine[56].

Battle of Turin.

From Milan to Rome, the Æmilian and Flaminian highways offered an eaſy march of about four hundred miles; but though Conſtantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed

Siege and battle of Verona.

[56] Zoſimus as well as Euſebius haſten from the paſſage of the Alps, to the deciſive action near Rome. We muſt apply to the two Panegyrics, for the intermediate actions of Conſtantine.

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his operations againſt another army of Italians, who, by their ſtrength and poſition, might either oppoſe his progreſs, or, in caſe of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general diſtinguiſhed by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were ſtationed in the province of Venetia. As ſoon as he was informed that Conſtantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Breſcia, and purſued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The neceſſity, the importance, and the difficulties of the ſiege of Verona, immediately preſented themſelves to the ſagacious mind of Conſtantine[57]. The city was acceſſible only by a narrow peninſula towards the weſt, as the other three ſides were ſurrounded by the Adige, a rapid river which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the beſieged derived an inexhauſtible ſupply of men and proviſions. It was not without great difficulty, and after ſeveral fruitleſs attempts, that Conſtantine found means to paſs the river at ſome diſtance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was leſs violent. He then encompaſſed Verona with ſtrong lines, puſhed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a deſperate ſally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had uſed every means of defence that the ſtrength of the place or that of the garriſon could afford, ſecretly eſcaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public ſafety. With indefatigable diligence he ſoon collected an army ſufficient either to meet Conſtantine in the field, or to attack him if he obſtinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the ap-

[57] The Marquis Maffei has examined the ſiege and battle of Verona, with that degree of attention and accuracy, which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, conſtructed by Gallienus, were leſs extenſive than the modern walls, and the Amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. See Verona Illuſtrata, Part i. p. 142. 150.

proach,

proach, of ſo formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the ſiege, whilſt, at the head of thoſe troops on whoſe valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in perſon to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the uſual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, ſuddenly changed his diſpoſition, and reducing the ſecond, extended the front of his firſt, line to a juſt proportion with that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confuſion in a moment of danger, commonly prove deciſive: but as this engagement began towards the cloſe of the day, and was conteſted with great obſtinacy during the whole night, there was leſs room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the ſoldiers. The return of light diſplayed the victory of Conſtantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thouſands of the vanquiſhed Italians. Their general Pompeianus was found among the ſlain; Verona immediately ſurrendered at diſcretion, and the garriſon was made priſoners of war[58]. When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their maſter on this important ſucceſs, they ventured to add ſome reſpectful complaints, of ſuch a nature, however, as the moſt jealous monarchs will liſten to without diſpleaſure. They repreſented to Conſtantine, that, not contented with performing all the duties of a commander, he had expoſed his own perſon with an exceſs of valour which almoſt degenerated into raſhneſs; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preſervation of a life, in which the ſafety of Rome and of the empire was involved[59].

[58] They wanted chains for ſo great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loſs; but the ſagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the ſwords of the vanquiſhed. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 11.

[59] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 10.

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Indolence and fears of Maxentius.

While Conſtantine ſignalized his conduct and valour in the field, the ſovereign of Italy appeared inſenſible of the calamities and danger of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions. Pleaſure was ſtill the only buſineſs of Maxentius. Concealing, or at leaſt attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the miſfortunes of his arms[60], he indulged himſelf in a vain confidence, which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itſelf[61]. The rapid progreſs of Conſtantine[62] was ſcarcely ſufficient to awaken him from this fatal ſecurity; he flattered himſelf, that his well-known liberality, and the majeſty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invaſions, would diſſipate with the ſame facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability, who had ſerved under the banners of Maximian, were at length compelled to inform his effeminate ſon of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and, with a freedom that at once ſurpriſed and convinced him, to urge the neceſſity of preventing his ruin, by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The reſources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were ſtill conſiderable. The Prætorian guards felt how ſtrongly their own intereſt and ſafety were connected with his cauſe; and a third army was ſoon collected, more numerous than thoſe which had been loſt in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in perſon. A ſtranger to the exerciſes of war, he trembled at the apprehenſion of ſo dangerous a conteſt; and as fear is commonly ſuperſtitious, he liſtened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and preſages which ſeemed to menace his life and empire.

[60] Literas calamitatum ſuarum indices ſupprimebat. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 15.

[61] Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat, is the fine cenſure which Tacitus paſſes on the ſupine indolence of Vitellius.

[62] The Marquis Maffei has made it extremely probable that Conſtantine was ſtill at Verona, the 1ſt of September, A. D. 312, and that the memorable æra of the indictions was dated from his conqueſt of the Ciſalpine Gaul.

Shame

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Shame at length ſupplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to ſuſtain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus reſounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuouſly beſieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the puſillanimity of their indolent ſovereign, and celebrating the heroic ſpirit of Conſtantine[63]. Before Maxentius left Rome, he conſulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of theſe ancient oracles were as well verſed in the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the ſecrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent anſwer, which might adapt itſelf to the event, and ſecure their reputation whatever ſhould be the chance of arms[64].

Victory of Conſtantine near Rome. A. D. 312. 28th Oct.

The celerity of Conſtantine's march has been compared to the rapid conqueſt of Italy by the firſt of the Cæſars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of hiſtory, ſince no more than fifty-eight days elapſed between the ſurrender of Verona and the final deciſion of the war. Conſtantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would conſult the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, inſtead of riſking his laſt hopes in a general engagement, he would ſhut himſelf up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines ſecured him againſt the danger of famine; and as the ſituation of Conſtantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the ſad neceſſity of deſtroying with fire and ſword the Imperial city, the nobleſt reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war[65]. It was with equal ſurpriſe and pleaſure, that on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome[66], he

[63] See Panegyr. Vet. xi. 16. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44.

[64] Illo die hoſtem Romanorum eſſe peritu-rum. The vanquiſhed prince became of courſe the enemy of Rome.

[65] See Panegyr. Vet. ix. 16. x. 27. The former of theſe orators magnifies the hoards of corn, which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the Iſlands. And yet, if there is any truth in the ſcarcity mentioned by Euſebius (in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 36.), the Imperial granaries muſt have been open only to the ſoldiers.

[66] Maxentius . . . tandem urbe in *Saxa Rubra*,

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he diſcovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle[67]. Their long front filled a very ſpacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tyber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Conſtantine diſpoſed his troops with conſummate ſkill, and that he choſe for himſelf the poſt of honour and danger. Diſtinguiſhed by the ſplendour of his arms, he charged in perſon the cavalry of his rival; and his irreſiſtible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally compoſed either of unwieldy cuiraſſiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horſe, which poſſeſſed more activity than the one, more firmneſs than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undiſciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the ſtandard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Prætorians, conſcious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and deſpair. Notwithſtanding their repeated efforts, thoſe brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death; and it was obſerved, that their bodies covered the ſame ground which had been occupied by their ranks[68]. The confuſion then became general, and the diſmayed troops of Maxentius, purſued by an implacable enemy, ruſhed by thouſands into the deep and rapid ſtream of the Tyber. The emperor himſelf attempted to eſcape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowds which preſſed together through that narrow paſſage, forced him into the

Rubra, millia ferme novem ægerrime progreſſus. Aurelius Victor. See Cellarius Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 463. Saxa Rubra was in the neighbourhood of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illuſtrated by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred Fabii.

[67] The poſt which Maxentius had taken, with the Tyber in his rear, is very clearly deſcribed by the two Panegyriſts, ix. 16. x. 28.

[68] Exceptis latrocinii illius primis auctoribus, qui deſperatâ veniâ, locum quem pugnæ ſumpſerant texere corporibus. Panegyr. Vet. ix. 17.

river,

river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour[69]. His body, which had ſunk very deep into the mud, was found with ſome difficulty the next day. The ſight of his head, when it was expoſed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admoniſhed them to receive, with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude, the fortunate Conſtantine, who thus atchieved by his valour and ability the moſt ſplendid enterpriſe of his life[70].

His reception,

In the uſe of victory, Conſtantine neither deſerved the praiſe of clemency, nor incurred the cenſure of immoderate rigour[71]. He inflicted the ſame treatment, to which a defeat would have expoſed his own perſon and family, put to death the two ſons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The moſt diſtinguiſhed adherents of Maxentius muſt have expected to ſhare his fate, as they had ſhared his proſperity and his crimes; but when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror reſiſted, with firmneſs and humanity, thoſe ſervile clamours which were dictated by flattery as well as by reſentment. Informers were puniſhed and diſcouraged; the innocent, who had ſuffered under the late tyranny, were recalled from exile, and reſtored to their

[69] A very idle rumour ſoon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful ſnare to deſtroy the army of the purſuers; but that the wooden bridge which was to have been looſened on the approach of Conſtantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 576.) very ſeriouſly examines whether, in contradiction to common ſenſe, the teſtimony of Euſebius and Zoſimus ought to prevail over the ſilence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but contemporary orator, who compoſed the ninth panegyric.

[70] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 86–88, and the two Panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterwards, afford the cleareſt notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Euſebius, and even the Epitomes, ſupply ſeveral uſeful hints.

[71] Zoſimus, the enemy of Conſtantine, allows (l. ii. p. 88.), that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death; but we may remark the expreſſive paſſage of Nazarius (Panegyr. Vet. x. 6.), Omnibus qui labefactari ſtatum ejus poterant cum ſtirpe deletis. The other orator (Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20, 21.) contents himſelf with obſerving, that Conſtantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel maſſacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla.

eſtates.

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eſtates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and ſettled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa[72]. The firſt time that Conſtantine honoured the ſenate with his preſence, he recapitulated his own ſervices and exploits in a modeſt oration, aſſured that illuſtrious order of his ſincere regard, and promiſed to re-eſtabliſh its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful ſenate repaid theſe unmeaning profeſſions by the empty titles of honour, which it was yet in their power to beſtow; and without preſuming to ratify the authority of Conſtantine, they paſſed a decree to aſſign him the firſt rank among the three *Auguſti* who governed the Roman world[73]. Games and feſtivals were inſtituted to preſerve the fame of his victory, and ſeveral edifices raiſed at the expence of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honour of his ſucceſsful rival. The triumphal arch of Conſtantine ſtill remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a ſingular teſtimony of the meaneſt vanity. As it was not poſſible to find in the capital of the empire, a ſculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument; the arch of Trajan, without any reſpect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was ſtripped of its moſt elegant figures. The difference of times and perſons, of actions and characters, was totally diſregarded. The Parthian captives appear proſtrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can ſtill diſcover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Conſtantine. The new ornaments which it was neceſſary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient ſculpture, are executed in the rudeſt and moſt unſkilful manner[74].

[72] See the two Panegyrics, and the laws of this and the enſuing year, in the Theodoſian Code.

[73] Panegyr. Vet. ix. 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who was confeſſedly the eldeſt Cæſar, claimed, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, the firſt rank among the Auguſti.

[74] Adhuc cuncta opera quæ magnifice conſtruxerat, urbis fanum, atque baſilicam, Flavii meritis patres ſacravere. Aurelius Victor. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, conſult Flaminius Vacca, apud Montfaucon, Diarium Italicum, p. 250, and l'Antiquité Expliquée of the latter, tom. iv. p. 171.

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and conduct at Rome.

The final abolition of the Prætorian guards was a meaſure of prudence as well as of revenge. Thoſe haughty troops, whoſe numbers and privileges had been reſtored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were for ever ſuppreſſed by Conſtantine. Their fortified camp was deſtroyed, and the few Prætorians who had eſcaped the fury of the ſword, were diſperſed among the legions, and baniſhed to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be ſerviceable without again becoming dangerous[75]. By ſuppreſſing the troops which were uſually ſtationed in Rome, Conſtantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the ſenate and people, and the diſarmed capital was expoſed without protection to the inſults or neglect of its diſtant maſter. We may obſerve, that in this laſt effort to preſerve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehenſion of a tribute, had raiſed Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the ſenate under the name of a free gift. They implored the aſſiſtance of Conſtantine. He vanquiſhed the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The ſenators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into ſeveral claſſes. The moſt opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold, the next claſs paid four, the laſt two, and thoſe whoſe poverty might have claimed an exemption, were aſſeſſed however at ſeven pieces of gold. Beſides the regular members of the ſenate, their ſons, their deſcendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and ſupported the heavy burdens, of the ſenatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our ſurpriſe, that Conſtantine ſhould be attentive to increaſe the number of perſons who were included under ſo uſeful a deſcrip-

[75] Prætoriæ legiones ac ſubſidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romæ, ſublata penitus; ſimul arma atque uſus indumenti militaris. Aurelius Victor. Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 89.) mentions this fact as an hiſtorian; and it is very pompouſly celebrated in the ninth Panegyric.

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tion[76]. After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor paſſed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he viſited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the ſolemn feſtivals of the tenth and of the twentieth years of his reign. Conſtantine was almoſt perpetually in motion to exerciſe the legions, or to inſpect the ſtate of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naiſſus, and Theſſalonica, were the occaſional places of his reſidence, till he founded a NEW ROME on the confines of Europe and Aſia[77].

His alliance with Licinius. A. D. 313. March.

Before Conſtantine marched into Italy, he had ſecured the friendſhip, or at leaſt the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promiſed his ſiſter Conſtantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the concluſion of the war, and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpoſe, appeared to cement the union of their families and intereſts[78]. In the midſt of the public feſtivity they were ſuddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks ſummoned Conſtantine to the Rhine, and the hoſtile approach of the ſovereign of Aſia demanded the immediate preſence of Licinius. Maximin had been the ſecret ally of Maxentius, and without being diſcouraged by his fate, he reſolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria towards the frontiers

War between Maximin and Licinius. A. D. 313.

[76] Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiæ tuæ pigneraveris; ut Senatûs dignitas . . . . ex totius Orbis flore conſiſteret. Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. 35. The word *pigneraveris* might almoſt ſeem maliciouſly choſen. Concerning the ſenatorial tax, ſee Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 115. the ſecond title of the ſixth book of the Theodoſian Code, with Godefroy's Commentary, and Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 726.

[77] From the Theodoſian Code, we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the careleſſneſs of tranſcribers.

[78] Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 89.) obſerves, that before the war, the ſiſter of Conſtantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a ſecond letter filled with reproaches for his ſuppoſed partiality to the cauſe of Maxentius and Maximin.

of

of Bythynia in the depth of winter. The ſeaſon was ſevere and tempeſtuous; great numbers of men as well as horſes periſhed in the ſnow; and as the roads were broken up by inceſſant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a conſiderable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived, with a haraſſed but formidable army, on the banks of the Thracian Boſphorus, before the lieutenants of Licinius were appriſed of his hoſtile intentions. Byzantium ſurrendered to the power of Maximin, after a ſiege of eleven days. He was detained ſome days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no ſooner taken poſſeſſion of that city, than he was alarmed by the intelligence, that Licinius had pitched his camp at the diſtance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitleſs negociation, in which the two princes attempted to ſeduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourſe to arms. The emperor of the Eaſt commanded a diſciplined and veteran army of above ſeventy thouſand men, and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thouſand Illyrians, was at firſt oppreſſed by the ſuperiority of numbers. His military ſkill, and the firmneſs of his troops, reſtored the day, and obtained a deciſive victory. The incredible ſpeed which Maximin exerted in his flight, is much more celebrated than his proweſs in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was ſeen pale, trembling, and without his Imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and ſixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Aſia was yet unexhauſted; and though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had ſtill power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he ſurvived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarſus, was variouſly aſcribed to deſpair, to poiſon, and to the divine juſtice. As Maximin was alike deſtitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the ſoldiers. The provinces of the Eaſt, delivered from the

The defeat, April 30,

and death of the former. Auguſt.

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terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius[79].

Cruelty of Licinius.

The vanquiſhed emperor left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about ſeven, years old. Their inoffenſive age might have excited compaſſion; but the compaſſion of Licinius was a very feeble reſource, nor did it reſtrain him from *extinguiſhing* the name and memory of his adverſary. The death of Severianus will admit of leſs excuſe, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the ſhort and obſcure reign of Severus in a diſtant part of the empire was already forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackeſt cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural ſon of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to ſuſtain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that under the protection of princes, who were indebted to his favour for the Imperial purple, Candidianus might paſs a ſecure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age, and the royalty of his birth, though unſupported either by merit or ambition, was ſufficient to exaſperate the jealous mind of Licinius[80]. To theſe innocent and illuſtrious victims of his tyranny, we muſt add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæſar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whoſe melancholy adventures might furniſh a very ſingular ſubject for tragedy. She had fulfilled and even ſurpaſſed the duties of a wife. As ſhe had not any children herſelf, ſhe condeſcended to adopt the illegitimate ſon of her huſband, and invariably diſplayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the

Unfortunate fate of the empreſs Valeria and her mother.

[79] Zoſimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events: but Lactantius expatiates on them (de M. P. c. 45—50.), aſcribing them to the miraculous interpoſition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.

[80] Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Conſtantine, in the uſe of victory.

tenderneſs

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tenderneſs and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample poſſeſſions provoked the avarice, and her perſonal attractions excited the deſires, of his ſucceſſor Maximin[81]. He had a wife ſtill alive, but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce paſſions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The anſwer of Valeria was ſuch as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceleſs condition compelled her to obſerve. She repreſented to the perſons whom Maximin had employed on this occaſion, "that even if honour could permit a woman of her "character and dignity to entertain a thought of ſecond nuptials, "decency at leaſt muſt forbid her to liſten to his addreſſes at a "time when the aſhes of her huſband and his benefactor were "ſtill warm; and while the ſorrows of her mind were ſtill expreſſed "by her mourning garments. She ventured to declare, that ſhe "could place very little confidence in the profeſſions of a man, "whoſe cruel inconſtancy was capable of repudiating a faithful "and affectionate wife[82]." On this repulſe, the love of Maximin was converted into fury, and as witneſſes and judges were always at his diſpoſal, it was eaſy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to aſſault the reputation as well as the happineſs of Valeria. Her eſtates were confiſcated, her eunuchs and domeſtics devoted to the moſt inhuman tortures, and ſeveral innocent and reſpectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendſhip, ſuffered death, on a falſe accuſation of adultery. The empreſs herſelf, together with her mother Priſca, was con-

[81] The ſenſual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expence of his ſubjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curioſity, leſt any part of their body ſhould be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyneſs and diſdain were conſidered as treaſon, and the obſtinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A cuſtom was gradually introduced, that no perſon ſhould marry a wife without the permiſſion of the emperor, "ut ipſe in omnibus nuptiis prægustator eſſet." Lactantius de M. P. c. 38.

[82] Lactantius de M. P. c. 39.

demned

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demned to exile; and as they were ignominiouſly hurried from place to place before they were confined to a ſequeſtered village in the deſerts of Syria, they expoſed their ſhame and diſtreſs to the provinces of the Eaſt, which, during thirty years, had reſpected their auguſt dignity. Diocletian made ſeveral ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the laſt return that he expected for the Imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to ſhare his retirement of Salona, and to cloſe the eyes of her afflicted father[83]. He entreated, but as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldneſs and diſdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified, in treating Diocletian as a ſuppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin ſeemed to aſſure the empreſſes of a favourable alteration in their fortune. The public diſorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they eaſily found means to eſcape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with ſome precaution, and in diſguiſe, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour, in the firſt days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young Candidianus, inſpired Valeria with a ſecret ſatisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted ſon. But theſe grateful proſpects were ſoon ſucceeded by horrour and aſtoniſhment, and the bloody executions which ſtained the palace of Nicomedia, ſufficiently convinced her, that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himſelf. Valeria conſulted her ſafety by a haſty flight, and, ſtill accompanied by her mother Priſca, they wandered above fifteen months[84] through the provinces, concealed in the diſguiſe of plebeian

[83] Diocletian at laſt ſent cognatum ſuum, quendam militarem ac potentem virum, to intercede in favour of his daughter (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41.). We are not ſufficiently acquainted with the hiſtory of theſe times, to point out the perſon who was employed.

[84] Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim menſibus plebeio cultû pervagata. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. There is ſome doubt whether we ſhould compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her eſcape. The expreſſion of *pervagata*

plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Theſſalonica; and as the ſentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the ſea. The people gazed on the melancholy ſpectacle; but their grief and indignation were ſuppreſſed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Diocletian. We lament their misfortunes, we cannot diſcover their crimes, and whatever idea we may juſtly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of ſurpriſe, that he was not contented with ſome more ſecret and decent method of revenge[85].

Quarrel between Conſtantine and Licinius. A. D. 314.

The Roman world was now divided between Conſtantine and Licinius, the former of whom was maſter of the Weſt, and the latter of the Eaſt. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would have renounced, or at leaſt would have ſuſpended, any farther deſigns of ambition. And yet a year had ſcarcely elapſed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms againſt each other. The genius, the ſucceſs, and the aſpiring temper, of Conſtantine, may ſeem to mark him out as the aggreſſor; but the perfidious character of Licinius juſtifies the moſt unfavourable ſuſpicions, and by the faint light which hiſtory reflects on this tranſaction[86], we may diſcover a conſpiracy fomented by his arts againſt the authority of his colleague. Conſtantine had lately given his ſiſter Anaſtaſia in marriage to Baſſianus, a man of a conſiderable family and fortune, and

gata ſeems to denote the latter; but in that caſe we muſt ſuppoſe, that the treatiſe of Lactantius was written after the firſt civil war between Licinius and Conſtantine. See Cuper, p. 254.

[85] Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Diocletian with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.

[86] The curious reader, who conſults the Valeſian Fragment, p. 713, will perhaps accuſe me of giving a bold and licentious paraphraſe; but if he conſiders it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and conſiſtent.

had

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had elevated his new kinſman to the rank of Cæſar. According to the ſyſtem of government inſtituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were deſigned for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promiſed favour was either attended with ſo much delay, or accompanied with ſo many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Baſſianus was alienated rather than ſecured by the honourable diſtinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the conſent of Licinius, and that artful prince, by the means of his emiſſaries, ſoon contrived to enter into a ſecret and dangerous correſpondence with the new Cæſar, to irritate his diſcontents, and to urge him to the raſh enterpriſe of extorting by violence what he might in vain ſolicit from the juſtice of Conſtantine. But the vigilant emperor diſcovered the conſpiracy before it was ripe for execution; and, after ſolemnly renouncing the alliance of Baſſianus, deſpoiled him of the purple, and inflicted the deſerved puniſhment on his treaſon and ingratitude. The haughty refuſal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals, who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the ſuſpicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Æmona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the ſtatues of Conſtantine, became the ſignal of diſcord between the two princes[87].

First civil war between them.

The firſt battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, ſituated on the river Save, about fifty miles above Sirmium[88]. From

[87] The ſituation of Æmona, or, as it is now called, Laybach, in Carniola (d'Anville Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 187.), may ſuggeſt a conjecture. As it lay to the north-eaſt of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of diſpute between the ſovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum.

[88] Cibalis or Cibalæ (whoſe name is ſtill preſerved in the obſcure ruins of Swilei) was ſituated about fifty miles from Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garriſons and cities on thoſe rivers are finely illuſtrated by M. d'Anville, in a memoir inſerted in l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii.

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Battle of Cibalis. A. D. 315. 8th Oct.

the inconſiderable forces which in this important conteſt two ſuch powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be inferred, that the one was ſuddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly ſurpriſed. The emperor of the Weſt had only twenty thouſand, and the ſovereign of the Eaſt no more than five and thirty thouſand, men. The inferiority of number was, however, compenſated by the advantage of the ground. Conſtantine had taken poſt in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a ſteep hill and a deep moraſs, and in that ſituation he ſteadily expected and repulſed the firſt attack of the enemy. He purſued his ſucceſs, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the ſtandard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the ſchool of Probus and Diocletian. The miſſile weapons on both ſides were ſoon exhauſted; the two armies, with equal valour, ruſhed to a cloſer engagement of ſwords and ſpears, and the doubtful conteſt had already laſted from the dawn of the day to a late hour of the evening, when the right wing, which Conſtantine led in perſon, made a vigorous and deciſive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius ſaved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but when he computed his loſs, which amounted to more than twenty thouſand men, he thought it unſafe to paſs the night in the preſence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with ſecrecy and diligence at the head of the greateſt part of his cavalry, and was ſoon removed beyond the danger of a purſuit. His diligence preſerved his wife, his ſon, and his treaſures, which he had depoſited at Sirmium. Licinius paſſed through that city, and breaking down the bridge on the Save, haſtened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he beſtowed the precarious title of Cæſar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier [89].

[89] Zoſimus (l. ii. p. 90, 91.) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the deſcriptions of Zoſimus are rhetorical rather than military.

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Battle of Mardia.

The plain of Mardia in Thrace was the theatre of a ſecond battle no leſs obſtinate and bloody than the former. The troops on both ſides diſplayed the ſame valour and diſcipline; and the victory was once more decided by the ſuperior abilities of Conſtantine, who directed a body of five thouſand men to gain an advantageous height, from whence, during the heat of the action, they attacked the rear of the enemy, and made a very conſiderable ſlaughter. The troops of Licinius, however, preſenting a double front, ſtill maintained their ground, till the approach of night put an end to the combat, and ſecured their retreat towards the mountains of Macedonia [90]. The loſs of two battles, and of his braveſt veterans, reduced the fierce ſpirit of Licinius to ſue for peace. His ambaſſador Miſtrianus was admitted to the audience of Conſtantine; he expatiated on the common topics of moderation and humanity, which are ſo familiar to the eloquence of the vanquiſhed; repreſented, in the moſt inſinuating language, that the event of the war was ſtill doubtful, whilſt its inevitable calamities were alike pernicious to both the contending parties; and declared, that he was authoriſed to propoſe a laſting and honourable peace in the name of the *two* emperors his maſters. Conſtantine received the mention of Valens with indignation and contempt. "It was not "for ſuch a purpoſe," he ſternly replied, "that we have advanced "from the ſhores of the weſtern ocean in an uninterrupted courſe "of combats and victories, that, after rejecting an ungrateful kinſ-"man, we ſhould accept for our colleague a contemptible ſlave. "The abdication of Valens is the firſt article of the treaty [91]." It

[90] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 92, 93. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 713. The Epitomes furniſh ſome circumſtances; but they frequently confound the two wars between Licinius and Conſtantine.

[91] Petrus Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 27. If it ſhould be thought that γαμβρος ſignifies more properly a ſon-in-law, we might conjecture, that Conſtantine, aſſuming the name as well as the duties of a father, had adopted his younger brothers and ſiſters, the children of Theodora. But in the beſt authors γαμβρος ſometimes ſignifies a huſband, ſometimes a father-in-law, and ſometimes a kinſman in general. See Spanheim Obſervat. ad Julian. Orat. i. p. 72.

was neceſſary to accept this humiliating condition, and the unhappy Valens, after a reign of a few days, was deprived of the purple and of his life. As ſoon as this obſtacle was removed, the tranquillity of the Roman world was eaſily reſtored. The ſucceſſive defeats of Licinius had ruined his forces, but they had diſplayed his courage and abilities. His ſituation was almoſt deſperate, but the efforts of deſpair are ſometimes formidable; and the good ſenſe of Conſtantine preferred a great and certain advantage to a third trial of the chance of arms. He conſented to leave his rival, or, as he again ſtyled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the poſſeſſion of Thrace, Aſia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece, were yielded to the weſtern empire, and the dominions of Conſtantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponneſus. It was ſtipulated by the ſame treaty, that three royal youths, the ſons of the emperors, ſhould be called to the hopes of the ſucceſſion. Criſpus and the young Conſtantine were ſoon afterwards declared Cæſars in the Weſt, while the younger Licinius was inveſted with the ſame dignity in the Eaſt. In this double proportion of honours, the conqueror aſſerted the ſuperiority of his arms and power[92].

Treaty of peace. December.

The reconciliation of Conſtantine and Licinius, though it was embittered by reſentment and jealouſy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehenſion of future dangers, maintained, however, above eight years, the tranquillity of the Roman world. As a very regular ſeries of the Imperial laws commences about this period, it would not be difficult to tranſcribe the civil re-

General peace and laws of Conſtantine. A. D. 315—323.

[92] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 93. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 713. Eutropius, x. 5. Aurelius Victor, Euſeb. in Chron. Sozomen, l. i. c. 2. Four of theſe writers affirm that the promotion of the Cæſars was an article of the treaty. It is however certain, that the younger Conſtantine and Licinius were not yet born; and it is highly probable that the promotion was made the 1ſt of March, A. D. 317. The treaty had probably ſtipulated that two Cæſars might be created by the weſtern, and one only by the eaſtern emperor; but each of them reſerved to himſelf the choice of the perſons.

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gulations which employed the leiſure of Conſtantine. But the moſt important of his inſtitutions are intimately connected with the new ſyſtem of policy and religion, which was not perfectly eſtabliſhed till the laſt and peaceful years of his reign. There are many of his laws, which, as far as they concern the rights and property of individuals, and the practice of the bar, are more properly referred to the private than to the public juriſprudence of the empire; and he publiſhed many edicts of ſo local and temporary a nature, that they would ill deſerve the notice of a general hiſtory. Two laws, however, may be ſelected from the crowd; the one, for its importance, the other, for its ſingularity; the former for its remarkable benevolence, the latter for its exceſſive ſeverity. 1. The horrid practice, ſo familiar to the ancients, of expoſing or murdering their newborn infants, was become every day more frequent in the provinces, and eſpecially in Italy. It was the effect of diſtreſs; and the diſtreſs was principally occaſioned by the intolerable burden of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel proſecutions of the officers of the revenue againſt their inſolent debtors. The leſs opulent or leſs induſtrious part of mankind, inſtead of rejoicing in an increaſe of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderneſs to releaſe their children from the impending miſeries of a life which they themſelves were unable to ſupport. The humanity of Conſtantine, moved, perhaps, by ſome recent and extraordinary inſtances of deſpair, engaged him to addreſs an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing immediate and ſufficient relief to be given to thoſe parents who ſhould produce, before the magiſtrates, the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate. But the promiſe was too liberal, and the proviſion too vague, to effect any general or permanent benefit[93]. The law, though it

[93] Codex Theodoſian. l. xi. tit. 27. tom. iv. p. 188. with Godefry's obſervations. See likewiſe, l. v. tit. 7—8.

may

may merit ſome praiſe, ſerved rather to diſplay than to alleviate the public diſtreſs. It ſtill remains an authentic monument to contradict and confound thoſe venal orators, who were too well ſatisfied with their own ſituation to diſcover either vice or miſery under the government of a generous ſovereign [94]. 2. The laws of Conſtantine againſt rapes were dictated with very little indulgence, for the moſt amiable weakneſſes of human nature; ſince the deſcription of that crime was applied not only to the brutal violence which compelled, but even to the gentle ſeduction which might perſuade, an unmarried woman, under the age of twenty-five, to leave the houſe of her parents. "The ſucceſsful raviſher was puniſhed with "death; and as if ſimple death was inadequate to the enormity "of his guilt, he was either burnt alive, or torn in pieces by wild "beaſts in the amphitheatre. The virgin's declaration that ſhe "had been carried away with her own conſent, inſtead of ſaving "her lover, expoſed her to ſhare his fate. The duty of a public "proſecution was intruſted to the parents of the guilty or unfor"tunate maid; and if the ſentiments of Nature prevailed on them "to diſſemble the injury, and to repair by a ſubſequent marriage the "honour of their family, they were themſelves puniſhed by exile and "confiſcation. The ſlaves, whether male or female, who were con"victed of having been acceſſary to the rape or ſeduction, were burnt "alive, or put to death by the ingenious torture of pouring down "their throats a quantity of melted lead. As the crime was of a "public kind, the accuſation was permitted even to ſtrangers. "The commencement of the action was not limited to any term of "years, and the conſequences of the ſentence were extended to the "innocent offſpring of ſuch an irregular union [95]." But whenever

[94] Omnia foris placita, domi proſpera, annonæ ubertate, fructuum copiâ, &c. Panegyr. Vet. x. 38. This oration of Nazarius was pronounced on the day of the Quinquennalia of the Cæſars, the 1ſt of March, A.D. 321.

[95] See the edict of Conſtantine, addreſſed to the Roman people, in the Theodoſian Code, l. ix. tit. 24. tom. iii. p. 189.

the

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the offence inſpires leſs horror than the puniſhment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind. The moſt odious parts of this edict were ſoftened or repealed in the ſubſequent reigns[96]; and even Conſtantine himſelf very frequently alleviated, by partial acts of mercy, the ſtern temper of his general inſtitutions. Such, indeed, was the ſingular humour of that emperor, who ſhewed himſelf as indulgent, and even remiſs, in the execution of his laws, as he was ſevere, and even cruel, in the enacting of them. It is ſcarcely poſſible to obſerve a more deciſive ſymptom of weakneſs, either in the character of the prince, or in the conſtitution of the government[97].

The Gothic war. A. D. 322.

The civil adminiſtration was ſometimes interrupted by the military defence of the empire. Criſpus, a youth of the moſt amiable character, who had received with the title of Cæſar the command of the Rhine, diſtinguiſhed his conduct, as well as valour, in ſeveral victories over the Franks and Alemanni; and taught the barbarians of that frontier to dread the eldeſt ſon of Conſtantine, and the grandſon of Conſtantius[98]. The emperor himſelf had aſſumed the more difficult and important province of the Danube. The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, reſpected the power of the empire, even in the midſt of its inteſtine diviſions. But the ſtrength of that warlike nation was now reſtored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had ariſen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days: the Sarmatians of the lake Mœotis followed the Gothic ſtandard either as ſubjects or as allies, and their united

[96] His ſon very fairly aſſigns the true reaſon of the repeal, "Ne ſub ſpecie atrocioris judicii aliqua in ulciſcendo crimine dilatio naſceretur." Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 193.

[97] Euſebius (in Vitâ Conſtant. l. iii. c. 1.) chooſes to affirm, that in the reign of his hero, the ſword of juſtice hung idle in the hands of the magiſtrates. Euſebius himſelf (l. iv. c. 29. 54.) and the Theodoſian Code will inform us, that this exceſſive lenity was not owing to the want either of atrocious criminals or of penal laws.

[98] Nazarius in Panegyr. Vet. x. The victory of Criſpus over the Alemanni, is expreſſed on ſome medals.

force

force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum. Campona, Margus, and Bononia, appear to have been the ſcenes of ſeveral memorable ſieges and battles [99]; and though Conſtantine encountered a very obſtinate reſiſtance, he prevailed at length in the conteſt, and the Goths were compelled to purchaſe an ignominious retreat, by reſtoring the booty and priſoners which they had taken. Nor was this advantage ſufficient to ſatisfy the indignation of the emperor. He reſolved to chaſtiſe as well as to repulſe the inſolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of his legions he paſſed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been conſtructed by Trajan, penetrated into the ſtrongeſt receſſes of Dacia [100], and when he had inflicted a ſevere revenge, condeſcended to give peace to the ſuppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they ſhould ſupply his armies with a body of forty thouſand ſoldiers [101]. Exploits like theſe were no doubt honourable to Conſtantine, and beneficial to the ſtate; but it may ſurely be queſtioned, whether they can juſtify the exaggerated aſſertion of Euſebius, that 'ALL SCYTHIA, as far the extremity of the North, divided as it was into ſo many names and nations of the moſt various and ſavage manners, had been added by his victorious arms to the Roman empire [102].

[99] See Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 93, 94; though the narrative of that hiſtorian is neither clear nor conſiſtent. The Panegyric of Optatianus (c. 23.) mentions the alliance of the Sarmatians with the Carpi and Getæ, and points out the ſeveral fields of battle. It is ſuppoſed, that the Sarmatian games, celebrated in the month of November, derived their origin from the ſucceſs of this war.

[100] In the Cæſars of Julian (p. 329. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 252.) Conſtantine boaſts, that he had recovered the province (Dacia) which Trajan had ſubdued. But it is inſinuated by Silenus, that the conqueſts of Conſtantine were like the gardens of Adonis, which fade and wither almoſt the moment they appear.

[101] Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21. I know not whether we may entirely depend on his authority. Such an alliance has a very recent air, and ſcarcely is ſuited to the maxims of the beginning of the fourth century.

[102] Euſebius in Vit. Conſtantin. l. i. c. 8. This paſſage, however, is taken from a general declamation on the greatneſs of Conſtantine, and not from any particular account of the Gothic war.

In

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Second civil war between Conſtantine and Licinius. A. D. 323.

In this exalted ſtate of glory it was impoſſible that Conſtantine ſhould any longer endure a partner in the empire. Confiding in the ſuperiority of his genius and military power, he determined, without any previous injury, to exert them for the deſtruction of Licinius, whoſe advanced age and unpopular vices ſeemed to offer a very eaſy conqueſt [103]. But the old emperor, awakened by the approaching danger, deceived the expectations of his friends as well as of his enemies. Calling forth that ſpirit and thoſe abilities by which he had deſerved the friendſhip of Galerius and the Imperial purple, he prepared himſelf for the conteſt, collected the forces of the Eaſt, and ſoon filled the plains of Hadrianople with his troops, and the Streights of the Helleſpont with his fleet. The army conſiſted of one hundred and fifty thouſand foot, and fifteen thouſand horſe; and as the cavalry was drawn, for the moſt part, from Phrygia and Cappadocia, we may conceive a more favourable opinion of the beauty of the horſes, than of the courage and dexterity of their riders. The fleet was compoſed of three hundred and fifty gallies of three ranks of oars. An hundred and thirty of theſe were furniſhed by Egypt, and the adjacent coaſt of Africa. An hundred and ten ſailed from the ports of Phœnicia and the iſle of Cyprus; and the maritime countries of Bithynia, Ionia, and Caria, were likewiſe obliged to provide an hundred and ten gallies. The troops of Conſtantine were ordered to rendezvous at Theſſalonica; they amounted to above an hundred and twenty thouſand horſe and foot [104]. Their emperor was ſatisfied with their martial appearance, and his army contained more ſoldiers, though fewer men, than that of his eaſtern competitor. The legions of Conſtantine were levied in the warlike provinces of Europe; action had

[103] Conſtantinus tamen, vir ingens, et omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparaſſet, ſimul principatum totius orbis affectans, Licinio bellum intulit. Eutropius, x. 5. Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 89. The reaſons which they have aſſigned for the firſt civil war may, with more propriety, be applied to the ſecond.

[104] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 94, 95.

confirmed

confirmed their diſcipline, victory had elevated their hopes, and there were among them a great number of veterans, who, after ſeventeen glorious campaigns under the ſame leader, prepared themſelves to deſerve an honourable diſmiſſion by a laſt effort of their valour[105]. But the naval preparations of Conſtantine were in every reſpect much inferior to thoſe of Licinius. The maritime cities of Greece ſent their reſpective quotas of men and ſhips to the celebrated harbour of Piræus, and their united forces conſiſted of no more than two hundred ſmall veſſels: a very feeble armament, if it is compared with thoſe formidable fleets which were equipped and maintained by the republic of Athens during the Peloponneſian war[106]. Since Italy was no longer the ſeat of government, the naval eſtabliſhments of Miſenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected; and as the ſhipping and mariners of the empire were ſupported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they ſhould the moſt abound in the induſtrious provinces of Egypt and Aſia. It is only ſurpriſing that the eaſtern emperor, who poſſeſſed ſo great a ſuperiority at ſea, ſhould have neglected the opportunity of carrying an offenſive war into the centre of his rival's dominions.

Inſtead of embracing ſuch an active reſolution, which might have changed the whole face of the war, the prudent Licinius expected the approach of his rival in a camp near Hadrianople, which he had fortified with an anxious care that betrayed his apprehenſion of the event. Conſtantine directed his march from Theſſalonica towards that part of Thrace, till he found himſelf ſtopped by the

Battle of Hadrianople. A. D. 323. July 3.

[105] Conſtantine was very attentive to the privileges and comforts of his fellow-veterans (Conveterani), as he now began to ſtyle them. See the Theodoſian Code, l. vii. tit. 20. tom. ii. p. 419, 429.

[106] Whilſt the Athenians maintained the empire of the ſea, their fleet conſiſted of three, and afterwards of four, hundred gallies of three ranks of oars, all completely equipped and ready for immediate ſervice. The arſenal in the port of Piræus had coſt the republic a thouſand talents, about two hundred and ſixteen thouſand pounds. See Thucydides de Bel. Peloponn. l. ii. c. 13. and Meurſius de Fortuna Attica, c. 19.

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broad and rapid ſtream of the Hebrus, and diſcovered the numerous army of Licinius, which filled the ſteep aſcent of the hill, from the river to the city of Hadrianople. Many days were ſpent in doubtful and diſtant ſkirmiſhes; but at length the obſtacles of the paſſage and of the attack were removed by the intrepid conduct of Conſtantine. In this place we might relate a wonderful exploit of Conſtantine, which, though it can ſcarcely be paralleled either in poetry or romance, is celebrated, not by a venal orator devoted to his fortune, but by an hiſtorian, the partial enemy of his fame. We are aſſured that the valiant emperor threw himſelf into the river Hebrus, accompanied only by *twelve* horſemen, and that by the effort or terror of his invincible arm, he broke, ſlaughtered, and put to flight a hoſt of an hundred and fifty thouſand men. The credulity of Zoſimus prevailed ſo ſtrongly over his paſſion, that among the events of the memorable battle of Hadrianople, he ſeems to have ſelected and embelliſhed, not the moſt important, but the moſt marvellous. The valour and danger of Conſtantine are atteſted by a ſlight wound which he received in the thigh, but it may be diſcovered even from an imperfect narration, and perhaps a corrupted text, that the victory was obtained no leſs by the conduct of the general than by the courage of the hero; that a body of five thouſand archers marched round to occupy a thick wood in the rear of the enemy, whoſe attention was diverted by the conſtruction of a bridge, and that Licinius, perplexed by ſo many artful evolutions, was reluctantly drawn from his advantageous poſt to combat on equal ground in the plain. The conteſt was no longer equal. His confuſed multitude of new levies was eaſily vanquiſhed by the experienced veterans of the Weſt. Thirty-four thouſand men are reported to have been ſlain. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by aſſault the evening of the battle; the greater part of the fugitives, who had retired to the mountains, ſurrendered themſelves

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ſelves the next day to the diſcretion of the conqueror; and his rival, who could no longer keep the field, confined himſelf within the walls of Byzantium[107].

Siege of Byzantium, and naval victory of Criſpus.

The ſiege of Byzantium, which was immediately undertaken by Conſtantine, was attended with great labour and uncertainty. In the late civil wars, the fortifications of that place, ſo juſtly conſidered as the key of Europe and Aſia, had been repaired and ſtrengthened; and as long as Licinius remained maſter of the ſea, the garriſon was much leſs expoſed to the danger of famine than the army of the beſiegers. The naval commanders of Conſtantine were ſummoned to his camp, and received his poſitive orders to force the paſſage of the Helleſpont, as the fleet of Licinius, inſtead of ſeeking and deſtroying their feeble enemy, continued inactive in thoſe narrow ſtreights where its ſuperiority of numbers was of little uſe or advantage. Criſpus, the emperor's eldeſt ſon, was intruſted with the execution of this daring enterpriſe, which he performed with ſo much courage and ſucceſs, that he deſerved the eſteem, and moſt probably excited the jealouſy, of his father. The engagement laſted two days, and in the evening of the firſt, the contending fleets, after a conſiderable and mutual loſs, retired into their reſpective harbours of Europe and Aſia. The ſecond day about noon a ſtrong ſouth wind[108] ſprang up, which carried the veſſels of Criſpus againſt the enemy, and as the caſual advantage was improved by his ſkilful intrepidity, he ſoon obtained a complete victory. An hundred and thirty veſſels were deſtroyed, five thou-

[107] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 95, 96. This great battle is deſcribed in the Valeſian fragment (p. 714.) in a clear though conciſe manner. "Licinius vero circum Hadrianopolin maximo exercitu latera ardui montis impleverat; illuc toto agmine Conſtantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terrâ marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum ſuis nitentibus, attamen diſciplinâ militari et felicitate, Conſtantinus Licinii confuſum et ſine ordine agentem vicit exercitum; leviter femore ſauciatus."

[108] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 97, 98. The current always ſets out of the Helleſpont; and when it is aſſiſted by a north wind, no veſſel can attempt the paſſage. A ſouth wind renders the force of the current almoſt imperceptible. See Tournefort's Voyage au Levant, Let. xi.

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ſand men were ſlain, and Amandus, the admiral of the Aſiatic fleet, eſcaped with the utmoſt difficulty to the ſhores of Chalcedon. As ſoon as the Helleſpont was open, a plentiful convoy of proviſions flowed into the camp of Conſtantine, who had already advanced the operations of the ſiege. He conſtructed artificial mounds of earth of an equal height with the ramparts of Byzantium. The lofty towers which were erected on that foundation, galled the beſieged with large ſtones and darts from the military engines, and the battering rams had ſhaken the walls in ſeveral places. If Licinius perſiſted much longer in the defence, he expoſed himſelf to be involved in the ruin, of the place. Before he was ſurrounded he prudently removed his perſon and treaſures to Chalcedon in Aſia; and as he was always deſirous of aſſociating companions to the hopes and dangers of his fortune, he now beſtowed the title of Cæſar on Martinianus, who exerciſed one of the moſt important offices of the empire[109].

Battle of Chryſopolis.

Such were ſtill the reſources, and ſuch the abilities, of Licinius, that, after ſo many ſucceſſive defeats, he collected in Bithynia a new army of fifty or ſixty thouſand men, while the activity of Conſtantine was employed in the ſiege of Byzantium. The vigilant emperor did not however neglect the laſt ſtruggles of his antagoniſt. A conſiderable part of his victorious army was tranſported over the Boſphorus in ſmall veſſels, and the deciſive engagement was fought ſoon after their landing on the heights of Chryſopolis, or, as it is now called, of Scutari. The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raiſed, ill armed, and worſe diſciplined, made head againſt their conquerors with fruitleſs but deſperate valour, till a total defeat and the ſlaughter of five and twenty thouſand men

[109] Aurelius Victor. Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 98. According to the latter, Martinianus was Magiſter Officiorum (he uſes the Latin appellation in Greek). Some medals ſeem to intimate, that during his ſhort reign he received the title of Auguſtus.

irretrievably

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Submiſſion and death of Licinius.

irretrievably determined the fate of their leader [110]. He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining ſome time for negotiation, than with the hope of any effectual defence. Conſtantia, his wife and the ſiſter of Conſtantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her huſband, and obtained from his policy rather than from his compaſſion, a ſolemn promiſe, confirmed by an oath, that after the ſacrifice of Martinianus, and the reſignation of the purple, Licinius himſelf ſhould be permitted to paſs the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour of Conſtantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recals the remembrance of that virtuous matron who was the ſiſter of Auguſtus, and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered, and it was no longer eſteemed infamous for a Roman to ſurvive his honour and independence. Licinius ſolicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himſelf and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *maſter*, was raiſed from the ground with inſulting pity, was admitted the ſame day to the Imperial banquet, and ſoon afterwards was ſent away to Theſſalonica, which had been choſen for the place of his confinement [111]. His confinement was ſoon terminated by death, and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the ſoldiers, or a decree of the ſenate, was ſuggeſted as the motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accuſed of forming a conſpiracy, and of holding a treaſonable correſpondence with the barbarians; but as he was never convicted, either by his own conduct or by any legal evidence, we may perhaps be allowed, from his weakneſs, to preſume his innocence [112]. The memory of Licinius was branded with infamy, his

[110] Euſebius (in Vitâ Conſtantin. l. ii. c. 16, 17.) aſcribes this deciſive victory to the pious prayers of the emperor. The Valeſian fragment (p. 714.) mentions a body of Gothic auxiliaries, under their chief Aliquaca, who adhered to the party of Licinius.

[111] Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 102. Victor Junior in Epitome. Anonym. Valeſian. p. 714.

[112] Contra religionem ſacramenti Theſſalonicæ privatus occiſus eſt. Eutropius x. 6. and his evidence is confirmed by Jerome (in Chronic.) as well as by Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 102. The Valeſian writer is the only one who mentions the ſoldiers, and it is Zonaras alone

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his ſtatues were thrown down, and, by a haſty edict, of ſuch miſchievous tendency that it was almoſt immediately corrected, all his laws, and all the judicial proceedings of his reign, were at once aboliſhed[113]. By this victory of Conſtantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one emperor, thirty-ſeven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his aſſociate Maximian.

Re-union of the empire. A. D. 324.

The ſucceſſive ſteps of the elevation of Conſtantine, from his firſt aſſuming the purple at York, to the reſignation of Licinius at Nicomedia, have been related with ſome minuteneſs and preciſion, not only as the events are in themſelves both intereſting and important, but ſtill more, as they contributed to the decline of the empire by the expence of blood and treaſure, and by the perpetual increaſe, as well of the taxes, as of the military eſtabliſhment. The foundation of Conſtantinople, and the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian religion, were the immediate and memorable conſequences of this revolution.

alone who calls in the aſſiſtance of the ſenate. Euſebius prudently ſlides over this delicate tranſaction. But Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to aſſert the treaſonable practices of Licinius.

[113] See the Theodoſian Code, l. 15. tit. 15. tom. v. p. 404, 405. Theſe edicts of Conſtantine betray a degree of paſſion and precipitancy very unbecoming of the character of a lawgiver.

CHAP. XV.

The Progreſs of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Sentiments, Manners, Numbers, and Condition, of the primitive Chriſtians.

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Importance of the inquiry.

A CANDID but rational inquiry into the progreſs and eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, may be conſidered as a very eſſential part of the hiſtory of the Roman empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence, or undermined by ſlow decay, a pure and humble religion gently inſinuated itſelf into the minds of men, grew up in ſilence and obſcurity, derived new vigour from oppoſition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the croſs on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Chriſtianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is ſtill profeſſed by the nations of Europe, the moſt diſtinguiſhed portion of human kind in arts and learning as well as in arms. By the induſtry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffuſed to the moſt diſtant ſhores of Aſia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies has been firmly eſtabliſhed from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients.

Its difficulties.

But this inquiry, however uſeful or entertaining, is attended with two peculiar difficulties. The ſcanty and ſuſpicious materials of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſeldom enable us to diſpel the dark cloud that hangs over the firſt age of the church. The great law of impartiality too often obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninſpired teachers and believers of the goſpel; and, to a careleſs obſerver, *their* faults may ſeem to caſt a ſhade on the faith which

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they profeſſed. But the ſcandal of the pious Chriſtian, and the fallacious triumph of the Infidel, ſhould ceaſe as ſoon as they recollect not only *by whom*, but likewiſe *to whom*, the Divine Revelation was given. The theologian may indulge the pleaſing taſk of deſcribing Religion as ſhe deſcended from Heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is impoſed on the hiſtorian. He muſt diſcover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, which ſhe contracted in a long reſidence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings.

Five cauſes of the growth of Chriſtianity.

Our curioſity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Chriſtian faith obtained ſo remarkable a victory over the eſtabliſhed religions of the earth. To this inquiry, an obvious but ſatisfactory anſwer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itſelf, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as truth and reaſon ſeldom find ſo favourable a reception in the world, and as the wiſdom of Providence frequently condeſcends to uſe the paſſions of the human heart, and the general circumſtances of mankind, as inſtruments to execute its purpoſe; we may ſtill be permitted, though with becoming ſubmiſſion, to aſk, not indeed what were the firſt, but what were the ſecondary cauſes of the rapid growth of the Chriſtian church. It will, perhaps, appear, that it was moſt effectually favoured and aſſiſted by the five following cauſes: I. The inflexible, and, if we may uſe the expreſſion, the intolerant zeal of the Chriſtians, derived, it is true, from the Jewiſh religion, but purified from the narrow and unſocial ſpirit, which, inſtead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moſes. II. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumſtance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. III. The miraculous powers aſcribed to the primitive church. IV. The pure and auſtere morals of the Chriſtians. V. The union and diſcipline of the Chriſtian republic, which gradually formed

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an independent and increaſing ſtate in the heart of the Roman empire.

The First Cauſe. Zeal of the Jews.

I. We have already deſcribed the religious harmony of the ancient world, and the facility with which the moſt different and even hoſtile nations embraced, or at leaſt reſpected, each other's ſuperſtitions. A ſingle people refuſed to join in the common intercourſe of mankind. The Jews, who, under the Aſſyrian and Perſian monarchies, had languiſhed for many ages the moſt deſpiſed portion of their ſlaves[1], emerged from obſcurity under the ſucceſſors of Alexander; and as they multiplied to a ſurpriſing degree in the Eaſt, and afterwards in the Weſt, they ſoon excited the curioſity and wonder of other nations[2]. The ſullen obſtinacy with which they maintained their peculiar rites and unſocial manners, ſeemed to mark them out a diſtinct ſpecies of men, who boldly profeſſed, or who faintly diſguiſed, their implacable hatred to the reſt of human-kind[3]. Neither the violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the example of the circumjacent nations, could ever perſuade the Jews to aſſociate with the inſtitutions of Moſes the elegant mythology of the Greeks[4]. According to the maxims of univerſal toleration, the Romans protected a ſuperſtition which they deſpiſed[5]. The

[1] Dum Aſſyrios penes, Medoſque, et Perſas Oriens fuit, deſpectiſſima pars ſervientium. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 8. Herodotus, who viſited Aſia whilſt it obeyed the laſt of thoſe empires, ſlightly mentions the Syrians of Paleſtine, who, according to their own confeſſion, had received from Egypt the rite of circumciſion. See l. ii. c. 104.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, l. xl. Dion Caſſius, l. xxxvii. p. 121. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 1–9. Juſtin, xxxvi. 2, 3.

[3] Tradidit arcano quæcunque volumine Moſes,
Non monſtrare vias eadem niſi ſacra colenti,
Quæſitos ad fontes ſolos deducere verpas.

The letter of this law is not to be found in the preſent volume of Moſes. But the wiſe, the humane Maimonides openly teaches, that if an idolater fall into the water, a Jew ought not to ſave him from inſtant death. See Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. vi. c. 28.

[4] A Jewiſh ſect, which indulged themſelves in a ſort of occaſional conformity, derived from Herod, by whoſe example and authority they had been ſeduced, the name of Herodians. But their numbers were ſo inconſiderable, and their duration ſo ſhort, that Joſephus has not thought them worthy of his notice. See Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 285.

[5] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 28.

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polite Auguſtus condeſcended to give orders, that ſacrifices ſhould be offered for his proſperity in the temple of Jeruſalem[6]; while the meaneſt of the poſterity of Abraham, who ſhould have paid the ſame homage to the Jupiter of the Capitol, would have been an object of abhorrence to himſelf and to his brethren. But the moderation of the conquerors was inſufficient to appeaſe the jealous prejudices of their ſubjects, who were alarmed and ſcandalized at the enſigns of paganiſm, which neceſſarily introduced themſelves into a Roman province[7]. The mad attempt of Caligula to place his own ſtatue in the temple of Jeruſalem, was defeated by the unanimous reſolution of a people who dreaded death much leſs than ſuch an idolatrous profanation[8]. Their attachment to the law of Moſes was equal to their deteſtation of foreign religions. The current of zeal and devotion, as it was contracted into a narrow channel, ran with the ſtrength, and ſometimes wirh the fury, of a torrent.

Its gradual increaſe.

This inflexible perſeverance, which appeared ſo odious or ſo ridiculous to the ancient world, aſſumes a more awful character, ſince Providence has deigned to reveal to us the myſterious hiſtory of the choſen people. But the devout and even ſcrupulous attachment to the Moſaic religion, ſo conſpicuous among the Jews who lived under the ſecond temple, becomes ſtill more ſurpriſing, if it is compared with the ſtubborn incredulity of their forefathers. When the law was given in thunder from Mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean, and the courſe of the planets were ſuſpended

[6] Philo de Legatione. Auguſtus left a foundation for a perpetual ſacrifice. Yet he approved of the neglect which his grandſon Caius expreſſed towards the temple of Jeruſalem. See Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 93. and Caſaubon's notes on that paſſage.

[7] See, in particular, Joſeph. Antiquitat. xvii. 6. xviii. 3. and de Bel. Judaic. i. 33. and ii. 9. Edit. Havercamp.

[8] Juſſi a Caio Cæſare, effigiem ejus in templo locare arma potius ſumpſere. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 9. Philo and Joſephus gave a very circumſtantial, but a very rhetorical, account of this tranſaction, which exceedingly perplexed the governor of Syria. At the firſt mention of this idolatrous propoſal, King Agrippa fainted away; and did not recover his ſenſes till the third day.

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for the convenience of the Iſraelites; and when temporal rewards and puniſhments were the immediate conſequences of their piety or diſobedience, they perpetually relapſed into rebellion againſt the viſible majeſty of their Divine King, placed the idols of the nations in the ſanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantaſtic ceremony that was practiſed in the tents of the Arabs, or in the cities of Phœnicia[9]. As the protection of Heaven was deſervedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity. The contemporaries of Moſes and Joſhua had beheld with careleſs indifference the moſt amazing miracles. Under the preſſure of every calamity, the belief of thoſe miracles has preſerved the Jews of a later period from the univerſal contagion of idolatry; and in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that ſingular people ſeems to have yielded a ſtronger and more ready aſſent to the traditions of their remote anceſtors, than to the evidence of their own ſenſes[10].

Their religion better ſuited to defence than to conqueſt.

The Jewiſh religion was admirably fitted for defence, but it was never deſigned for conqueſt; and it ſeems probable that the number of proſelytes was never much ſuperior to that of apoſtates. The divine promiſes were originally made, and the diſtinguiſhing rite of circumciſion was enjoined to a ſingle family. When the poſterity of Abraham had multiplied like the ſands of the ſea, the Deity, from whoſe mouth they received a ſyſtem of laws and ceremonies, declared himſelf the proper and as it were the national God of Iſrael; and with the moſt jealous care ſeparated his favourite people from the reſt of mankind. The conqueſt of the land of Canaan

[9] For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities, it may be obſerved, that Milton has compriſed in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines, the two large and learned ſyntagmas, which Selden had compoſed on that abſtruſe ſubject.

[10] "How long will this people provoke "me? and how long will it be ere they *be*-"*lieve* me, for all the *ſigns* which I have ſhewn "among them?" (Numbers xiv. 11.) It would be eaſy, but it would be unbecoming, to juſtify the complaint of the Deity from the whole tenor of the Moſaic hiſtory.

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was accompanied with ſo many wonderful and with ſo many bloody circumſtances, that the victorious Jews were left in a ſtate of irreconcilable hoſtility with all their neighbours. They had been commanded to extirpate ſome of the moſt idolatrous tribes, and the execution of the Divine will had ſeldom been retarded by the weakneſs of humanity. With the other nations they were forbidden to contract any marriages or alliances, and the prohibition of receiving them into the congregation, which in ſome caſes was perpetual, almoſt always extended to the third, to the ſeventh, or even to the tenth generation. The obligation of preaching to the Gentiles the faith of Moſes, had never been inculcated as a precept of the law, nor were the Jews inclined to impoſe it on themſelves as a voluntary duty. In the admiſſion of new citizens, that unſocial people was actuated by the ſelfiſh vanity of the Greeks, rather than by the generous policy of Rome. The deſcendants of Abraham were flattered by the opinion, that they alone were the heirs of the covenant, and they were apprehenſive of diminiſhing the value of their inheritance, by ſharing it too eaſily with the ſtrangers of the earth. A larger acquaintance with mankind, extended their knowledge without correcting their prejudices; and whenever the God of Iſrael acquired any new votaries, he was much more indebted to the inconſtant humour of polytheiſm than to the active zeal of his own miſſionaries[11]. The religion of Moſes ſeems to be inſtituted for a particular country as well as for a ſingle nation; and if a ſtrict obedience had been paid to the order, that every male, three times in the year, ſhould preſent himſelf before the Lord Jehovah, it would have been impoſſible that the Jews could ever have ſpread themſelves beyond the narrow limits of the promiſed land[12]. That obſtacle was

[11] All that relates to the Jewiſh proſelytes has been very ably treated by Baſnage, Hiſt. des Juifs, l. vi. c. 6, 7.

[12] See Exod. xxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16. the commentators, and a very ſenſible note in the Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 603. edit. fol.

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indeed removed by the deſtruction of the temple of Jeruſalem; but the moſt conſiderable part of the Jewiſh religion was involved in its deſtruction; and the pagans, who had long wondered at the ſtrange report of an empty ſanctuary[13], were at a loſs to diſcover what could be the object, or what could be the inſtruments, of a worſhip which was deſtitute of temples and of altars, of prieſts and of ſacrifices. Yet even in their fallen ſtate, the Jews, ſtill aſſerting their lofty and excluſive privileges, ſhunned, inſtead of courting, the ſociety of ſtrangers. They ſtill inſiſted with inflexible rigour on thoſe parts of the law which it was in their power to practiſe. Their peculiar diſtinctions of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdenſome obſervances, were ſo many objects of diſguſt and averſion for the other nations, to whoſe habits and prejudices they were diametrically oppoſite. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumciſion was alone capable of repelling a willing proſelyte from the door of the ſynagogue[14].

More liberal zeal of Chriſtianity.

Under theſe circumſtances, Chriſtianity offered itſelf to the world, armed with the ſtrength of the Moſaic law, and delivered from the weight of its fetters. An excluſive zeal for the truth of religion, and the unity of God, was as carefully inculcated in the new as in the ancient ſyſtem: and whatever was now revealed to mankind concerning the nature and deſigns of the Supreme Being, was fitted to increaſe their reverence for that myſterious doctrine. The divine authority of Moſes and the prophets was admitted, and even eſtabliſhed, as the firmeſt baſis of Chriſtianity. From the beginning of the world, an uninterrupted ſeries of predictions had

[13] When Pompey, uſing or abuſing the right of conqueſt, entered into the Holy of Holies, it was obſerved with amazement, "Nullâ intus Deûm effigie, vacuam ſedem "et inania arcana." Tacit. Hiſt. v. 9. It was a popular ſaying, with regard to the Jews,

Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant.

[14] A ſecond kind of circumciſion was inflicted on a Samaritan or Egyptian proſelyte. The ſullen indifference of the Talmudiſts, with reſpect to the converſion of ſtrangers, may be ſeen in Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. vi. c. 6.

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announced and prepared the long expected coming of the Meſſiah, who, in compliance with the groſs apprehenſions of the Jews, had been more frequently repreſented under the character of a King and Conqueror, than under that of a Prophet, a Martyr, and the Son of God. By his expiatory ſacrifice, the imperfect ſacrifices of the temple were at once conſummated and aboliſhed. The ceremonial law, which conſiſted only of types and figures, was ſucceeded by a pure and ſpiritual worſhip, equally adapted to all climates as well as to every condition of mankind; and to the initiation of blood, was ſubſtituted a more harmleſs initiation of water. The promiſe of divine favour, inſtead of being partially confined to the poſterity of Abraham, was univerſally propoſed to the freeman and the ſlave, to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the Jew and to the Gentile. Every privilege that could raiſe the proſelyte from earth to Heaven, that could exalt his devotion, ſecure his happineſs, or even gratify that ſecret pride, which, under the ſemblance of devotion, inſinuates itſelf into the human heart, was ſtill reſerved for the members of the Chriſtian church; but at the ſame time all mankind was permitted, and even ſolicited, to accept the glorious diſtinction, which was not only proffered as a favour, but impoſed as an obligation. It became the moſt ſacred duty of a new convert to diffuſe among his friends and relations the ineſtimable bleſſing which he had received, and to warn them againſt a refuſal that would be ſeverely puniſhed as a criminal diſobedience to the will of a benevolent but all-powerful deity.

Obſtinacy and reaſons of the believing Jews.

The enfranchiſement of the church from the bonds of the ſynagogue, was a work however of ſome time and of ſome difficulty. The Jewiſh converts, who acknowledged Jeſus in the character of the Meſſiah foretold by their ancient oracles, reſpected him as a prophetic teacher of virtue and religion; but they obſtinately adhered to the ceremonies of their anceſtors, and were deſirous of impoſing

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impoſing them on the Gentiles, who continually augmented the number of believers. Theſe Judaiſing Chriſtians ſeem to have argued with ſome degree of plauſibility from the divine origin of the Moſaic law, and from the immutable perfections of its great Author. They affirmed, *that* if the Being, who is the ſame through all eternity, had deſigned to aboliſh thoſe ſecred rites which had ſerved to diſtinguiſh his choſen people, the repeal of them would have been no leſs clear and ſolemn than their firſt promulgation: *that*, inſtead of thoſe frequent declarations, which either ſuppoſe or aſſert the perpetuity of the Moſaic religion, it would have been repreſented as a proviſionary ſcheme intended to laſt only till the coming of the Meſſiah, who ſhould inſtruct mankind in a more perfect mode of faith and of worſhip[15]: *that* the Meſſiah himſelf, and his diſciples who converſed with him on earth, inſtead of authorizing by their example the moſt minute obſervances of the Moſaic law[16], would have publiſhed to the world the abolition of thoſe uſeleſs and obſolete ceremonies, without ſuffering Chriſtianity to remain during ſo many years obſcurely confounded among the ſects of the Jewiſh church. Arguments like theſe appear to have been uſed in the defence of the expiring cauſe of the Moſaic law; but the induſtry of our learned divines has abundantly explained the ambiguous language of the Old Teſtament, and the ambiguous conduct of the apoſtolic teachers. It was proper gradually to unfold the ſyſtem of the Goſpel, and to pronounce, with the utmoſt caution and tenderneſs, a ſentence of condemnation ſo repugnant to the inclination and prejudices of the believing Jews.

[15] Theſe arguments were urged with great ingenuity by the Jew Orobio, and refuted with equal ingenuity and candour by the Chriſtian Limborch. See the Amica Collatio (it well deſerves that name), or account of the diſpute between them.

[16] Jeſus --- circumciſus erat; cibis utebatur Judaicis; veſtitû ſimili; purgatos ſcabie mittebat ad ſacerdotes; Paſchata et alios dies feſtos religioſé obſervabat: Si quos ſanavit ſabatho, oſtendit non tantum ex lege, ſed et exceptis ſententiis talia opera ſabatho non interdicta. Grotius de veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ, l. v. c. 7. A little afterwards (c. 12.), he expatiates on the condeſcenſion of the apoſtles.

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The Nazarene church of Jeruſalem.

The hiſtory of the church of Jerulalem affords a lively proof of the neceſſity of thoſe precautions, and of the deep impreſſion which the Jewiſh religion had made on the minds of its ſectaries. The firſt fifteen biſhops of Jeruſalem were all circumciſed Jews; and the congregation over which they preſided, united the law of Moſes with the doctrine of Chriſt[17]. It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded only forty days after the death of Chriſt, and was governed almoſt as many years under the immediate inſpection of his apoſtle, ſhould be received as the ſtandard of orthodoxy[18]. The diſtant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable Parent, and relieved her diſtreſſes by a liberal contribution of alms. But when numerous and opulent ſocieties were eſtabliſhed in the great cities of the empire, in Antioch, Alexandria, Epheſus, Corinth, and Rome, the reverence which Jeruſalem had inſpired to all the Chriſtian colonies inſenſibly diminiſhed. The Jewiſh converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes, who had laid the foundations of the church, ſoon found themſelves overwhelmed by the increaſing multitudes, that from all the various religions of polytheiſm inliſted under the banner of Chriſt: and the Gentiles, who, with the approbation of their peculiar apoſtle, had rejected the intolerable weight of Moſaic ceremonies, at length refuſed to their more ſcrupulous brethren the ſame toleration which at firſt they had humbly ſolicited for their own practice. The ruin of the temple, of the city, and of the public religion of the Jews, was ſeverely felt by the Nazarenes; as in their manners, though not in their faith, they maintained ſo intimate a connexion with their impious

[17] Pæne omnes Chriſtum Deum ſub legis obſervatione credebant. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. See Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. iv. c. 5.

[18] Moſheim de Rebus Chriſtianis ante Conſtantinum Magnum, p. 153. In this maſterly performance, which I ſhall often have occaſion to quote, he enters much more fully into the ſtate of the primitive church, than he has an opportunity of doing in his General Hiſtory.

countrymen,

countrymen, whoſe misfortunes were attributed by the Pagans to the contempt, and more juſtly aſcribed by the Chriſtians to the wrath, of the Supreme Deity. The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jeruſalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languiſhed above ſixty years in ſolitude and obſcurity [19]. They ſtill enjoyed the comfort of making frequent and devout viſits to the *Holy City*, and the hope of being one day reſtored to thoſe ſeats which both nature and religion taught them to love as well as to revere. But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the deſperate fanaticiſm of the Jews filled up the meaſure of their calamities; and the Romans, exaſperated by their repeated rebellions, exerciſed the rights of victory with unuſual rigour. The emperor founded, under the name of Ælia Capitolina, a new city on Mount Sion [20], to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and denouncing the ſevereſt penalties againſt any of the Jewiſh people who ſhould dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garriſon of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. The Nazarenes had only one way left to eſcape the common proſcription, and the force of truth was on this occaſion aſſiſted by the influence of temporal advantages. They elected Marcus for their biſhop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles, and moſt probably a native either of Italy or of ſome of the Latin provinces. At his perſuaſion, the moſt conſiderable part of the congregation renounced the Moſaic law, in the practice of which they had perſevered above a century. By this ſacrifice of their habits and prejudices, they

[19] Euſebius, l. iii. c. 5. Le Clerc, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 605. During this occaſional abſence, the biſhop and church of Pella ſtill retained the title of Jeruſalem. In the ſame manner, the Roman pontiffs reſided ſeventy years at Avignon; and the patriarchs of Alexandria have long ſince transferred their epiſcopal ſeat to Cairo.

[20] Dion Caſſius, l. lxix. The exile of the Jewiſh nation from Jeruſalem is atteſted by Ariſto of Pella (apud Euſeb. l. iv. c. 6.), and is mentioned by ſeveral eccleſiaſtical writers; though ſome of them too haſtily extend this interdiction to the whole country of Paleſtine.

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purchaſed a free admiſſion into the colony of Hadrian, and more firmly cemented their union with the Catholic church [21].

The Ebionites.

When the name and honours of the church of Jeruſalem had been reſtored to Mount Sion, the crimes of hereſy and ſchiſm were imputed to the obſcure remnant of the Nazarenes, which refuſed to accompany their Latin biſhop. They ſtill preſerved their former habitation of Pella, ſpread themſelves into the villages adjacent to Damaſcus, and formed an inconſiderable church in the city of Bœrea, or, as it is now called, of Aleppo, in Syria [22]. The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for thoſe Chriſtian Jews, and they ſoon received from the ſuppoſed poverty of their underſtanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites [23]. In a few years after the return of the church of Jeruſalem, it became a matter of doubt and controverſy, whether a man who ſincerely acknowledged Jeſus as the Meſſiah, but who ſtill continued to obſerve the law of Moſes, could poſſibly hope for ſalvation. The humane temper of Juſtin Martyr inclined him to anſwer this queſtion in the affirmative; and though he expreſſed himſelf with the moſt guarded diffidence, he ventured to determine in favour of ſuch an imperfect Chriſtian, if he were content to practiſe the Moſaic ceremonies, without pretending to aſſert their general uſe or neceſſity. But when Juſtin was preſſed to declare the ſentiment of the church, he confeſſed that there were very many among the ortho-

[21] Euſebius, l. iv. c. 6. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. By comparing their unſatisfactory accounts, Moſheim (p. 327, &c.) has drawn out a very diſtinct repreſentation of the circumſtances and motives of this revolution.

[22] Le Clerc (Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 477. 535.) ſeems to have collected from Euſebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and other writers, all the principal circumſtances that relate to the Nazarenes or Ebionites. The nature of their opinions ſoon divided them into a ſtricter and a milder ſect; and there is ſome reaſon to conjecture, that the family of Jeſus Chriſt remained members, at leaſt, of the latter and more moderate party.

[23] Some writers have been pleaſed to create an Ebion, the imaginary author of their ſect and name. But we can more ſafely rely on the learnd Euſebius than on the vehement Tertullian, or the credulous Epiphanius. According to Le Clerc, the Hebrew word *Ebjonim* may be tranſlated into Latin by that of *Pauperes*. See Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 477.

dox Chriſtians, who not only excluded their Judaiſing brethren from the hope of ſalvation, but who declined any intercourſe with them in the common offices of friendſhip, hoſpitality, and ſocial life [24]. The more rigorous opinion prevailed, as it was natural to expect, over the milder; and an eternal bar of ſeparation was fixed between the diſciples of Moſes and thoſe of Chriſt. The unfortunate Ebionites, rejected from one religion as apoſtates, and from the other as heretics, found themſelves compelled to aſſume a more decided character; and although ſome traces of that obſolete ſect may be diſcovered as late as the fourth century, they inſenſibly melted away either into the church or the ſynagogue [25].

The Gnoſtics.

While the orthodox church preſerved a juſt medium between exceſſive veneration and improper contempt for the law of Moſes, the various heretics deviated into equal but oppoſite extremes of error and extravagance. From the acknowledged truth of the Jewiſh religion, the Ebionites had concluded that it could never be aboliſhed. From its ſuppoſed imperfections the Gnoſtics as haſtily inferred that it never was inſtituted by the wiſdom of the Deity. There are ſome objections againſt the authority of Moſes and the prophets, which too readily preſent themſelves to the ſceptical mind; though they can only be derived from our ignorance of remote anti-

[24] See the very curious Dialogue of Juſtin Martyr with the Jew Tryphon. The conference between them was held at Epheſus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and about twenty years after the return of the church of Pella to Jeruſalem. For this date conſult the accurate note of Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. ii. p. 511.

[25] Of all the ſyſtems of Chriſtianity, that of Abyſſinia is the only one which ſtill adheres to the Moſaic rites (Geddes's Church Hiſtory of Æthiopia, and Diſſertations de le Grand ſur la Relation du P. Lobo.). The eunuch of the queen Candace might ſuggeſt ſome ſuſpicions; but as we are aſſured (Socrates, i. 19. Sozomen, ii. 24. Ludolphus, p. 281.), that the Æthiopians were not converted till the fourth century; it is more reaſonable to believe, that they reſpected the Sabbath, and diſtinguiſhed the forbidden meats, in imitation of the Jews, who, in a very early period, were ſeated on both ſides of the Red Sea. Circumciſion had been practiſed by the moſt ancient Æthiopians, from motives of health and cleanlineſs, which ſeem to be explained in the Recherches Philoſophiques ſur les Americains, tom. ii. p. 117.

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quity, and from our incapacity to form an adequate judgment of the divine œconomy. Theſe objections were eagerly embraced and as petulantly urged by the vain ſcience of the Gnoſtics[26]. As thoſe heretics were, for the moſt part, averſe to the pleaſures of ſenſe, they moroſely arraigned the polygamy of the patriarchs, the galantries of David, and the ſeraglio of Solomon. The conqueſt of the land of Canaan, and the extirpation of the unſuſpecting natives, they were at a loſs how to reconcile with the common notions of humanity and juſtice. But when they recollected the ſanguinary liſt of murders, of executions, and of maſſacres, which ſtain almoſt every page of the Jewiſh annals, they acknowledged that the barbarians of Paleſtine had exerciſed as much compaſſion towards their idolatrous enemies, as they had ever ſhewn to their friends or countrymen[27]. Paſſing from the ſectaries of the law to the law itſelf, they aſſerted that it was impoſſible that a religion which conſiſted only of bloody ſacrifices and trifling ceremonies, and whoſe rewards as well as puniſhments were all of a carnal and temporal nature, could inſpire the love of virtue, or reſtrain the impetuoſity of paſſion. The Moſaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profane deriſion by the Gnoſtics, who would not liſten with patience to the repoſe of the Deity after ſix days labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the ſpeaking ſerpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced againſt human kind for the venal offence of their firſt progenitors[28]. The God of Iſrael was impiouſly repreſented by the Gnoſtics, as a being liable to paſſion

[26] Beauſobre, Hiſtoire du Manicheiſme, l. i. c. 3. has ſtated their objections, particularly thoſe of Fauſtus, the adverſary of Auguſtin, with the moſt learned impartiality.

[27] Apud ipſos fides obſtinata, miſericordia in promptû: adverſus omnes alios hoſtile odium. Tacit. Hiſt. v. 4. Surely Tacitus had ſeen the Jews with too favourable an eye. The peruſal of Joſephus muſt have deſtroyed the antitheſis.

[28] Dr. Burnet (Archæologia, l. ii. c. 7.) has diſcuſſed the firſt chapters of Geneſis with too much wit and freedom.

and

and to error, capricious in his favour, implacable in his reſentment, meanly jealous of his ſuperſtitious worſhip, and confining his partial providence to a ſingle people, and to this tranſitory life. In ſuch a character they could diſcover none of the features of the wiſe and omnipotent father of the univerſe[29]. They allowed that the religion of the Jews was ſomewhat leſs criminal than the idolatry of the Gentiles; but it was their fundamental doctrine, that the Chriſt whom they adored as the firſt and brighteſt emanation of the Deity, appeared upon earth to reſcue mankind from their various errors, and to reveal a *new* ſyſtem of truth and perfection. The moſt learned of the fathers, by a very ſingular condeſcenſion, have imprudently admitted the ſophiſtry of the Gnoſtics. Acknowledging that the literal ſenſe is repugnant to every principle of faith as well as reaſon, they deem themſelves ſecure and invulnerable behind the ample veil of allegory, which they carefully ſpread over every tender part of the Moſaic diſpenſation[30].

Their ſects, progreſs, and influence.

It has been remarked with more ingenuity than truth, that the virgin purity of the church was never violated by ſchiſm or hereſy before the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, about one hundred years after the death of Chriſt[31]. We may obſerve with much more propriety, that, during that period, the diſciples of the Meſſiah were indulged in a freer latitude both of faith and practice, than has ever been allowed in ſucceeding ages. As the terms of communion were inſenſibly narrowed, and the ſpiritual authority of the prevailing party was exerciſed with increaſing ſeverity, many of its moſt reſpectable adherents, who were called upon to renounce, were

[29] The milder Gnoſtics conſidered Jehovah, the Creator, as a Being of a mixed nature between God and the Dæmon. Others confounded him with the evil principle. Conſult the ſecond century of the general hiſtory of Moſheim, which gives a very diſtinct, though conciſe, account of their ſtrange opinions on this ſubject.

[30] See Beauſobre, Hiſt. du Manicheiſme, l. i. c. 4. Origen and St. Auguſtin were among the Allegoriſts.

[31] Hegeſippus, ap. Euſeb. l. iii. 32. iv. 22. Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. vii. 17.

provoked

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provoked to aſſert their private opinions, to purſue the conſequences of their miſtaken principles, and openly to erect the ſtandard of rebellion againſt the unity of the church. The Gnoſtics were diſtinguiſhed as the moſt polite, the moſt learned, and the moſt wealthy of the Chriſtian name, and that general appellation which expreſſed a ſuperiority of knowledge, was either aſſumed by their own pride, or ironically beſtowed by the envy of their adverſaries. They were almoſt without exception of the race of the Gentiles, and their principal founders ſeem to have been natives of Syria or Egypt, where the warmth of the climate diſpoſes both the mind and the body to indolent and contemplative devotion. The Gnoſtics blended with the faith of Chriſt many ſublime but obſcure tenets, which they derived from oriental philoſophy, and even from the religion of Zoroaſter, concerning the eternity of matter, the exiſtence of two principles, and the myſterious hierarchy of the inviſible world [32]. As ſoon as they launched out into that vaſt abyſs, they delivered themſelves to the guidance of a diſordered imagination; and as the paths of error are various and infinite, the Gnoſtics were imperceptibly divided into more than fifty particular ſects [33], of whom the moſt celebrated appear to have been the Baſilidians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and, in a ſtill later period, the Manichæans. Each of theſe ſects could boaſt of its biſhops and congregations, of its doctors and martyrs [34], and, inſtead of the four goſpels adopted by the church, the heretics produced a multitude of hiſtories, in which the actions and diſcourſes of Chriſt and

[32] In the account of the Gnoſtics of the ſecond and third centuries, Moſheim is ingenious and candid; Le Clerc dull, but exact; Beauſobre almoſt always an apologiſt; and it is much to be feared, that the primitive fathers are very frequently calumniators.

[33] See the catalogues of Irenæus and Epiphanius. It muſt indeed be allowed, that thoſe writers were inclined to multiply the number of ſects which oppoſed the *unity* of the church.

[34] Euſebius, l. iv. c. 15. Sozomen. l.ii.c.32. See in Bayle, in the article of *Marcion*, a curious detail of a diſpute on that ſubject. It ſhould ſeem that ſome of the Gnoſtics (the Baſilidians) declined, and even refuſed, the honour of martyrdom. Their reaſons were ſingular and abſtruſe. See Moſheim, p. 359.

of

of his apoſtles were adapted to their reſpective tenets [35]. The ſucceſs of the Gnoſtics was rapid and extenſive [36]. They covered Aſia and Egypt, eſtabliſhed themſelves in Rome, and ſometimes penetrated into the provinces of the Weſt. For the moſt part they aroſe in the ſecond century, flouriſhed during the third, and were ſuppreſſed in the fourth or fifth, by the prevalence of more faſhionable controverſies, and by the ſuperior aſcendant of the reigning power. Though they conſtantly diſturbed the peace, and frequently diſgraced the name, of religion, they contributed to aſſiſt rather than to retard the progreſs of Chriſtianity. The Gentile converts, whoſe ſtrongeſt objections and prejudices were directed againſt the law of Moſes, could find admiſſion into many Chriſtian ſocieties, which required not from their untutored mind any belief of an antecedent revelation. Their faith was inſenſibly fortified and enlarged, and the church was ultimately benefited by the conqueſts of its moſt inveterate enemies [37].

The dæmons conſidered as the gods of antiquity.

But whatever difference of opinion might ſubſiſt between the Orthodox, the Ebionites, and the Gnoſtics, concerning the divinity or the obligation of the Moſaic law, they were all equally animated by the ſame excluſive zeal, and by the ſame abhorrence for idolatry which had diſtinguiſhed the Jews from the other nations of the ancient world. The philoſopher, who conſidered the ſyſtem of

[35] See a very remarkable paſſage of Origen (Proem. ad Lucan.). That indefatigable writer, who had conſumed his life in the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, relies for their authenticity on the inſpired authority of the church. It was impoſſible that the Gnoſtics could receive our preſent goſpels, many parts of which (particularly in the reſurrection of Chriſt) are directly, and as it might ſeem deſignedly, pointed againſt their favourite tenets. It is therefore ſomewhat ſingular that Ignatius (Epiſt. ad Smyrn. Patr. Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 34.) ſhould chuſe to employ a vague and doubtful tradition, inſtead of quoting the certain teſtimony of the evangeliſts.

[36] Faciunt favos et veſpæ; faciunt eccleſias et Marcionitæ, is the ſtrong expreſſion of Tertullian, which I am obliged to quote from memory. In the time of Epiphanius (adverſ. Hæreſes, p. 302.) the Marcionites were very numerous in Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Perſia.

[37] Auguſtin is a memorable inſtance of this gradual progreſs from reaſon to faith. He was, during ſeveral years, engaged in the Manichæan ſect.

polytheiſm

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polytheiſm as a compoſition of human fraud and error, could diſguiſe a ſmile of contempt under the maſk of devotion, without apprehending that either the mockery, or the compliance, would expoſe him to the reſentment of any inviſible, or, as he conceived them, imaginary powers. But the eſtabliſhed religions of Paganiſm were ſeen by the primitive Chriſtians in a much more odious and formidable light. It was the univerſal ſentiment both of the church and of heretics, that the dæmons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry[38]. Thoſe rebellious ſpirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels, and caſt down into the infernal pit, were ſtill permitted to roam upon earth, to torment the bodies, and to ſeduce the minds, of ſinful men. The dæmons ſoon diſcovered and abuſed the natural propenſity of the human heart towards devotion, and, artfully withdrawing the adoration of mankind from their Creator, they uſurped the place and honours of the Supreme Deity. By the ſucceſs of their malicious contrivances, they at once gratified their own vanity and revenge, and obtained the only comfort of which they were yet ſuſceptible, the hope of involving the human ſpecies in the participation of their guilt and miſery. It was confeſſed, or at leaſt it was imagined, that they had diſtributed among themſelves the moſt important characters of polytheiſm, one dæmon aſſuming the name and attributes of Jupiter, another of Æſculapius, a third of Venus, and a fourth perhaps of Apollo[39]; and that, by the advantage of their long experience and aërial nature, they were enabled to execute, with ſufficient ſkill and dignity, the parts which they had undertaken. They lurked in the temples, inſtituted feſtivals and ſacrifices, invented fables, pronounced oracles, and were frequently allowed to perform

[38] The unanimous ſentiment of the primitive church is very clearly explained by Juſtin Martyr. Apolog. Major, by Athenagoras Legat. c. 22, &c. and by Lactantius, Inſtitut. Divin. ii. 14—19.

[39] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 23.) alleges the confeſſion of the Dæmons themſelves as often as they wereto rmented by the Chriſtian exorciſts.

miracles.

miracles. The Chriſtians, who, by the interpoſition of evil ſpirits, could ſo readily explain every præternatural appearance, were diſpoſed and even deſirous to admit the moſt extravagant fictions of the Pagan mythology. But the belief of the Chriſtian was accompanied with horror. The moſt trifling mark of reſpect to the national worſhip he conſidered as a direct homage yielded to the dæmon, and as an act of rebellion againſt the majeſty of God.

Abhorrence of the Chriſtians for idolatry.

In conſequence of this opinion, it was the firſt but arduous duty of a Chriſtian to preſerve himſelf pure and undefiled by the practice of idolatry. The religion of the nations was not merely a ſpeculative doctrine profeſſed in the ſchools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheiſm were cloſely interwoven with every circumſtance of buſineſs or pleaſure, of public or of private life; and it ſeemed impoſſible to eſcape the obſervance of them, without, at the ſame time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amuſements of ſociety [40]. The Ceremonies. important tranſactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by ſolemn ſacrifices, in which the magiſtrate, the ſenator, and the ſoldier, were obliged to preſide or to participate [41]. The public ſpectacles were an eſſential part of the cheerful devotion of the Pagans, and the gods were ſuppoſed to accept, as the moſt grateful offering, the games that the prince and people celebrated in honour of their peculiar feſtivals [42]. The Chriſtian, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre,

[40] Tertullian has written a moſt ſevere treatiſe againſt idolatry, to caution his brethren againſt the hourly danger of incurring that guilt. Recogita ſylvam, et quantæ latitant ſpinæ. De Coronâ Militis, c. 10.

[41] The Roman ſenate was always held in a temple or conſecrated place (Aulus Gellius, xiv. 7.). Before they entered on buſineſs, every ſenator dropt ſome wine and frankincenſe on the altar. Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 35.

[42] See Tertullian, De Spectaculis. This ſevere reformer ſhews no more indulgence to a tragedy of Euripides, than to a combat of gladiators. The dreſs of the actors particularly offends him. By the uſe of the lofty buſkin, they impiouſly ſtrive to add a cubit to their ſtature, c. 23.

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found himſelf encompaſſed with infernal ſnares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hoſpitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happineſs [43]. When the bride, ſtruggling with well-affected reluctance, was forced in hymenæal pomp over the threſhold of her new habitation [44], or when the ſad proceſſion of the dead ſlowly moved towards the funeral pile [45]; the Chriſtian, on theſe intereſting occaſions, was compelled to deſert the perſons who were the deareſt to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent to thoſe impious ceremonies.

Arts.

Every art and every trade that was in the leaſt concerned in the framing or adorning of idols was polluted by the ſtain of idolatry [46]; a ſevere ſentence, ſince it devoted to eternal miſery the far greater part of the community, which is employed in the exerciſe of liberal or mechanic profeſſions. If we caſt our eyes over the numerous remains of antiquity, we ſhall perceive, that beſides the immediate repreſentations of the Gods, and the holy inſtruments of their worſhip, the elegant forms and agreeable fictions conſecrated by the imagination of the Greeks, were introduced as the richeſt ornaments of the houſes, the dreſs, and the furniture, of the Pagans [47]. Even the arts of muſic and painting, of eloquence and poetry, flowed from the ſame impure origin. In the ſtyle of the fathers, Apollo and the Muſes were the organs of the

[43] The ancient practice of concluding the entertainment with libations, may be found in every claſſic. Socrates and Seneca, in their laſt moments, made a noble application of this cuſtom. Poſtquam ſtagnum calidæ aquæ introïit, reſpergens proximos fervorum, additâ voce, libare ſe liquorem illum Jovi Liberatori. Tacit. Annal. xv. 64.

[44] See the elegant but idolatrous hymn of Catullus, on the nuptials of Manlius and Julia. O Hymen, Hymenæe Iö! Quis huic Deo compararier auſit?

[45] The ancient funerals (in thoſe of Miſenus and Pallas) are no leſs accurately deſcribed by Virgil, than they are illuſtrated by his commentator Servius. The pile itſelf was an altar, the flames were fed with the blood of victims, and all the aſſiſtants were ſprinkled with luſtral water.

[46] Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 11.

[47] See every part of Montfaucon's Antiquities. Even the reverſes of the Greek and Roman coins were frequently of an idolatrous nature. Here indeed the ſcruples of the Chriſtian were ſuſpended by a ſtronger paſſion.

infernal

infernal ſpirit, Homer and Virgil were the moſt eminent of his ſervants, and the beautiful mythology which pervades and animates the compoſitions of their genius, is deſtined to celebrate the glory of the dæmons. Even the common language of Greece and Rome abounded with familiar but impious expreſſions, which the imprudent Chriſtian might too careleſsly utter, or too patiently hear [48].

Feſtivals.

The dangerous temptations which on every ſide lurked in ambuſh to ſurpriſe the unguarded believer, aſſailed him with redoubled violence on the days of ſolemn feſtivals. So artfully were they framed and diſpoſed throughout the year, that ſuperſtition always wore the appearance of pleaſure, and often of virtue [49]. Some of the moſt ſacred feſtivals in the Roman ritual were deſtined to ſalute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity, to indulge the pious remembrance of the dead and living, to aſcertain the inviolable bounds of property, to hail, on the return of ſpring, the genial powers of fecundity, to perpetuate the two memorable æras of Rome, the foundation of the city, and that of the republic, and to reſtore, during the humane licenſe of the Saturnalia, the primitive equality of mankind. Some idea may be conceived of the abhorrence of the Chriſtians for ſuch impious ceremonies, by the ſcrupulous delicacy which they diſplayed on a much leſs alarming occaſion. On days of general feſtivity, it was the cuſtom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might perhaps have been toleratcd as a mere civil inſtitution. But

[48] Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 20, 21, 22. If a Pagan friend (on the occaſion perhaps of ſneezing) uſed the familiar expreſſion of "Jupiter bleſs you," the Chriſtian was obliged to proteſt againſt the divinity of Jupiter.

[49] Conſult the moſt laboured work of Ovid, his imperfect *Faſti*. He finiſhed no more than the firſt ſix months of the year. The compilation of Macrobius is called the *Saturnalia*, but it is only a ſmall part of the firſt book that bears any relation to the title.

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it moſt unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the houſehold gods, that the laurel was ſacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a ſymbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their firſt origin to the ſervice of ſuperſtition. The trembling Chriſtians, who were perſuaded in this inſtance to comply with the faſhion of their country, and the commands of the magiſtrate, laboured under the moſt gloomy apprehenſions, from the reproaches of their own conſcience, the cenſures of the church, and the denunciations of divine vengeance [50].

Zeal for Chriſtianity.

Such was the anxious diligence which was required to guard the chaſtity of the goſpel from the infectious breath of idolatry. The ſuperſtitious obſervances of public or private rites were careleſsly practiſed, from education and habit, by the followers of the eſtabliſhed religion. But as often as they occurred, they afforded the Chriſtians an opportunity of declaring and confirming their zealous oppoſition. By theſe frequent proteſtations their attachment to the faith was continually fortified, and in proportion to the increaſe of zeal, they combated with the more ardour and ſucceſs in the holy war, which they had undertaken againſt the empire of the dæmons.

THE SECOND CAUSE. The doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul among the philoſophers;

II. The writings of Cicero [51] repreſent in the moſt lively colours the ignorance, the errors, and the uncertainty of the ancient philoſophers with regard to the immortality of the ſoul. When they are deſirous of arming their diſciples againſt the fear of death,

[50] Tertullian has compoſed a defence, or rather panegyric, of the raſh action of a Chriſtian ſoldier, who, by throwing away his crown of laurel, had expoſed himſelf and his brethren to the moſt imminent danger. By the mention of the *emperors* (Severus and Caracalla) it is evident, notwithſtanding the wiſhes of M. de Tillemont, that Tertullian compoſed his treatiſe De Coronâ, long before he was engaged in the errors of the Montaniſts. See Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. iii. p. 384.

[51] In particular, the firſt book of the Tuſculan Queſtions, and the treatiſe De Senectute; and the Somnium Scipionis, contain, in the moſt beautiful language, every thing that Grecian philoſophy, or Roman good ſenſe, could poſſibly ſuggeſt on this dark but important object.

they

they inculcate, as an obvious, though melancholy poſition, that the fatal ſtroke of our diſſolution releaſes us from the calamities of life; and that thoſe can no longer ſuffer who no longer exiſt. Yet there were a few ſages of Greece and Rome who had conceived a more exalted, and, in ſome reſpects, a juſter idea of human nature; though it muſt be confeſſed, that, in the ſublime inquiry, their reaſon had been often guided by their imagination, and that their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers, when they exerciſed the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment, in the moſt profound ſpeculations, or the moſt important labours, and when they reflected on the deſire of fame, which tranſported them into future ages, far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave; they were unwilling to confound themſelves with the beaſts of the field, or to ſuppoſe, that a being, for whoſe dignity they entertained the moſt ſincere admiration, could be limited to a ſpot of earth, and to a few years of duration. With this favourable prepoſſeſſion they ſummoned to their aid the ſcience, or rather the language, of Metaphyſics. They ſoon diſcovered, that as none of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of the mind, the human ſoul muſt conſequently be a ſubſtance diſtinct from the body, pure, ſimple, and ſpiritual, incapable of diſſolution, and ſuſceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happineſs after the releaſe from its corporeal priſon. From theſe ſpecious and noble principles, the philoſophers who trod in the footſteps of Plato, deduced a very unjuſtifiable concluſion, ſince they aſſerted, not only the future immortality, but the paſt eternity of the human ſoul, which they were too apt to conſider as a portion of the infinite and ſelf-exiſting ſpirit, which pervades and ſuſtains the univerſe[52]. A doctrine thus removed

[52] The pre-exiſtence of human ſouls, ſo far at leaſt as that doctrine is compatible with religion, was adopted by many of the Greek and Latin fathers. See Beauſobre, Hiſt. du Manicheiſme, l. vi. c. 4.

beyond

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beyond the ſenſes and the experience of mankind, might ſerve to amuſe the leiſure of a philoſophic mind; or, in the ſilence of ſolitude, it might ſometimes impart a ray of comfort to deſponding virtue; but the faint impreſſion which had been received in the ſchools, was ſoon obliterated by the commerce and buſineſs of active life. We are ſufficiently acquainted with the eminent perſons who flouriſhed in the age of Cicero, and of the firſt Cæſars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be aſſured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any ſerious conviction of the rewards or puniſhments of a future ſtate. At the bar and in the ſenate of Rome the ableſt orators were not apprehenſive of giving offence to their hearers, by expoſing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and underſtanding [53].

among the Pagans of Greece and Rome;

Since therefore the moſt ſublime efforts of philoſophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the deſire, the hope, or, at moſt, the probability, of a future ſtate, there is nothing, except a divine revelation, that can aſcertain the exiſtence, and deſcribe the condition of the inviſible country which is deſtined to receive the ſouls of men after their ſeparation from the body. But we may perceive ſeveral defects inherent to the popular religions of Greece and Rome, which rendered them very unequal to ſo arduous a taſk. 1. The general ſyſtem of their mythology was unſupported by any ſolid proofs; and the wiſeſt among the Pagans had already diſclaimed its uſurped authority. 2. The deſcription of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and of poets, who peopled them with ſo many phantoms and monſters, who diſpenſed their rewards and puniſhments with ſo little equity,

[53] See Cicero pro Cluent. c. 61. Cæſar ap. Salluſt. de Bell. Catilin. c. 50. Juvenal. Satir. ii. 149.

Eſſe aliquos manes, et ſubterranea regna, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Nec pueri credunt, niſi qui nondum æra lavantur.

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that a ſolemn truth, the moſt congenial to the human heart, was oppreſſed and diſgraced by the abſurd mixture of the wildeſt fictions [54]. 3. The doctrine of a future ſtate was ſcarcely conſidered among the devout polytheiſts of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith. The providence of the gods, as it related to public communities rather than to private individuals, was principally diſplayed on the viſible theatre of the preſent world. The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo, expreſſed the anxiety of their worſhippers for temporal happineſs, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life [55]. The important truth of the immortality of the ſoul was inculcated with more diligence as well as ſucceſs in India, in Aſſyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul; and ſince we cannot attribute ſuch a difference to the ſuperior knowledge of the barbarians, we muſt aſcribe it to the influence of an eſtabliſhed prieſthood, which employed the motives of virtue as the inſtrument of ambition [56].

among the barbarians;

We might naturally expect, that a principle ſo eſſential to religion, would have been revealed in the cleareſt terms to the choſen people of Paleſtine, and that it might ſafely have been intruſted to the hereditary prieſthood of Aaron. It is incumbent on us to adore the myſterious diſpenſations of Providence [57], when we diſ-

among the Jews;

[54] The xith book of the Odyſſey gives a very dreary and incoherent account of the infernal ſhades. Pindar and Virgil have embelliſhed the picture; but even thoſe poets, though more correct than their great model, are guilty of very ſtrange inconſiſtencies. See Bayle, Reſponſes aux Queſtions d'un Provincial, part iii. c. 22.

[55] See the xvith epiſtle of the firſt book of Horace, the xiiith Satire of Juvenal, and the iid Satire of Perſius: theſe popular diſcourſes expreſs the ſentiment and language of the multitude.

[56] If we confine ourſelves to the Gauls, we may obſerve, that they intruſted, not only their lives, but even their money, to the ſecurity of another world. Vetus ille mos Gallorum occurrit (ſays Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 6. p. 10.), quos memoria proditur eſt, pecunias mutuas, quæ his apud inferos redderentur, dare ſolitos. The ſame cuſtom is more darkly inſinuated by Mela, l. iii. c. 2. It is almoſt needleſs to add, that the profits of trade hold a juſt proportion to the credit of the merchant, and that the Druids derived from their holy profeſſion a character of reſponſibility, which could ſcarcely be claimed by any other order of men.

[57] The right reverend author of the Divine Legation of Moſes aſſigns a very curious reaſon for the omiſſion, and moſt ingeniouſly retorts it on the unbelievers.

cover,

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cover, that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul is omitted in the law of Moſes; it is darkly inſinuated by the prophets, and during the long period which elapſed between the Egyptian and the Babylonian ſervitudes, the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compaſs of the preſent life [58]. After Cyrus had permitted the exiled nation to return into the promiſed land, and after Ezra had reſtored the ancient records of their religion, two celebrated ſects, the Sadducees and the Phariſees, inſenſibly aroſe at Jeruſalem [59]. The former ſelected from the more opulent and diſtinguiſhed ranks of ſociety, were ſtrictly attached to the literal ſenſe of the Moſaic law, and they piouſly rejected the immortality of the ſoul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the divine book, which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of ſcripture the Phariſees added that of tradition, and they accepted, under the name of traditions, ſeveral ſpeculative tenets from the philoſophy or religion of the eaſtern nations. The doctrines of fate or predeſtination, of angels and ſpirits, and of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, were in the number of theſe new articles of belief; and as the Phariſees, by the auſterity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewiſh people, the immortality of the ſoul became the prevailing ſentiment of the ſynagogue, under the reign of the Aſmonæan princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itſelf with ſuch a cold and languid aſſent as might ſatisfy the mind of a Polytheiſt; and as ſoon as they admitted the idea of a future ſtate, they embraced it

[58] See Le Clerc (Prolegomena ad Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. ſect. 1. c. 8.). His authority ſeems to carry the greater weight, as he has written a learned and judicious commentary on the books of the Old Teſtament.

[59] Joſeph. Antiquitat. l. xiii. c. 10. De Bell. Jud. ii. 8. According to the moſt natural interpretation of his words, the Sadducees admitted only the Pentateuch; but it has pleaſed ſome modern critics to add the prophets to their creed, and to ſuppoſe, that they contented themſelves with rejecting the traditions of the Phariſees. Dr. Jortin has argued that point in his Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 103.

with

with the zeal which has always formed the characteriſtic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability: and it was ſtill neceſſary, that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reaſon, and received by ſuperſtition, ſhould obtain the ſanction of divine truth from the authority and example of Chriſt.

among the Chriſtians.

When the promiſe of eternal happineſs was propoſed to mankind, on condition of adopting the faith, and of obſerving the precepts of the goſpel, it is no wonder that ſo advantageous an offer ſhould have been accepted by great numbers of every religion, of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire. The ancient Chriſtians were animated by a contempt for their preſent exiſtence, and by a juſt confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion.

Approaching end of the world.

In the primitive church, the influence of truth was very powerfully ſtrengthened by an opinion, which however it may deſerve reſpect for its uſefulneſs and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was univerſally believed, that the end of the world and the kingdom of Heaven, were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apoſtles; the tradition of it was preſerved by their earlieſt diſciples, and thoſe who underſtood in their literal ſenſe the diſcourſes of Chriſt himſelf, were obliged to expect the ſecond and glorious coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguiſhed, which had beheld his humble condition upon earth, and which might ſtill be witneſs of the calamities of the Jews under Veſpaſian or Hadrian. The revolution of ſeventeen centuries has inſtructed us not to preſs too cloſely the myſterious language of prophecy and revelation; but as long as, for wiſe purpoſes, this error was permitted to ſubſiſt in the church, it was productive of the moſt ſalutary effects on the faith and practice of Chriſtians, who lived in the awful expectation of that moment when the globe itſelf, and

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all the various race of mankind, ſhould tremble at the appearance of their divine judge[60].

Doctrine of the Millennium.

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the ſecond coming of Chriſt. As the works of the creation had been finiſhed in ſix days, their duration in their preſent ſtate, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to ſix thouſand years[61]. By the ſame analogy it was inferred, that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almoſt elapſed[62], would be ſucceeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thouſand years; and that Chriſt, with the triumphant band of the ſaints and the elect who had eſcaped death, or who had been miraculouſly revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the laſt and general reſurrection. So pleaſing was this hope to the mind of believers, that the *New Jeruſalem*, the ſeat of this bliſsful kingdom, was quickly adorned with all the gayeſt colours of the imagination. A felicity conſiſting only of pure and ſpiritual pleaſure, would have appeared too refined for its inhabitants, who were ſtill ſuppoſed to poſſeſs their human nature and ſenſes. A garden of Eden, with the amuſements of the paſtoral life, was no longer ſuited to the advanced ſtate of ſociety which prevailed under the Roman empire. A city was therefore erected

[60] This expectation was countenanced by the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and by the firſt epiſtle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians. Eraſmus removes the difficulty by the help of allegory and metaphor; and the learned Grotius ventures to inſinuate, that, for wiſe purpoſes, the pious deception was permitted to take place.

[61] See Burnet's Sacred Theory, part iii. c. 5. This tradition may be traced as high as the author of the Epiſtle of Barnabas, who wrote in the firſt century, and who ſeems to have been half a Jew.

[62] The primitive church of Antioch computed almoſt 6000 years from the creation of the world to the birth of Chriſt. Africanus, Lactantius, and the Greek church, have reduced that number to 5500, and Euſebius has contented himſelf with 5200 years. Theſe calculations were formed on the Septuagint, which was univerſally received during the ſix firſt centuries. The authority of the Vulgate and of the Hebrew text has determined the moderns, Proteſtants as well as Catholics, to prefer a period of about 4000 years; though, in the ſtudy of profane antiquity, they often find themſelves ſtreightened by thoſe narrow limits.

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of gold and precious ſtones, and a ſupernatural plenty of corn and wine was beſtowed on the adjacent territory; in the free enjoyment of whoſe ſpontaneous productions, the happy and benevolent people was never to be reſtrained by any jealous laws of excluſive property[63]. The aſſurance of ſuch a Millennium, was carefully inculcated by a ſucceſſion of fathers from Juſtin Martyr[64] and Irenæus, who converſed with the immediate diſciples of the apoſtles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the ſon of Conſtantine[65]. Though it might not be univerſally received, it appears to have been the reigning ſentiment of the orthodox believers; and it ſeems ſo well adapted to the deſires and apprehenſions of mankind, that it muſt have contributed in a very conſiderable degree to the progreſs of the Chriſtian faith. But when the edifice of the church was almoſt completed, the temporary ſupport was laid aſide. The doctrine of Chriſt's reign upon earth, was at firſt treated as a profound allegory, was conſidered by degrees as a doubtful and uſeleſs opinion, and was at length rejected as the abſurd invention of hereſy and fanaticiſm[66]. A myſterious prophecy, which ſtill forms a part of the ſacred canon, but which was thought to favour the exploded ſentiment, has very narrowly eſcaped the proſcription of the church[67].

Whilſt

[63] Moſt of theſe pictures were borrowed from a miſinterpretation of Iſaiah, Daniel, and the Apocalypſe. One of the groſſeſt images may be found in Irenæus (l. v. p. 455.), the diſciple of Papias, who had ſeen the apoſtle St. John.

[64] See the ſecond dialogue of Juſtin with Tryphon, and the ſeventh book of Lactantius. It is unneceſſary to allege all the intermediate fathers, as the fact is not diſputed. Yet the curious reader may conſult Daillè de Uſu Patrum, l. ii. c. 4.

[65] The teſtimony of Juſtin, of his own faith and that of his orthodox brethren, in the doctrine of a Millennium, is delivered in the cleareſt and moſt ſolemn manner (Dialog. cum Tryphonte Jud. p. 177, 178. Edit. Benedictin.). If in the beginning of this important paſſage there is any thing like an inconſiſtency, we may impute it, as we think proper, either to the author or to his tranſcribers.

[66] Dupin, Bibliothéque Eccleſiaſtique, tom. i. p. 223. tom. ii. p. 366. and Moſheim, p. 720; though the latter of theſe learned divines is not altogether candid on this occaſion.

[67] In the council of Laodicea (about the year 360) the Apocalypſe was tacitly excluded from the ſacred canon, by the ſame churches of Aſia to which it is addreſſed; and

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Conflagration of Rome and of the world.

Whilſt the happineſs and glory of a temporal reign were promiſed to the diſciples of Chriſt, the moſt dreadful calamities were denounced againſt an unbelieving world. The edification of the new Jeruſalem was to advance by equal ſteps with the deſtruction of the myſtic Babylon; and as long as the emperors who reigned before Conſtantine perſiſted in the profeſſion of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the city and to the empire of Rome. A regular ſeries was prepared of all the moral and phyſical evils which can afflict a flouriſhing nation; inteſtine diſcord, and the invaſion of the fierceſt barbarians from the unknown regions of the North; peſtilence and famine, comets and eclipſes, earthquakes and inundations[68]. All theſe were only ſo many preparatory and alarming ſigns of the great cataſtrophe of Rome, when the country of the Scipios and Cæſars ſhould be conſumed by a flame from Heaven, and the city of the ſeven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, ſhould be buried in a vaſt lake of fire and brimſtone. It might, however, afford ſome conſolation to Roman vanity, that the period of their empire would be that of the world itſelf; which, as it had once periſhed by the element of water, was deſtined to experience a ſecond and a ſpeedy deſtruction from the element of fire. In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Chriſtian very happily coincided with the tradition

we may learn from the complaint of Sulpicius Severus, that their ſentence had been ratified by the greater number of Chriſtians of his time. From what cauſes then is the Apocalypſe at preſent ſo generally received by the Greek, the Roman, and the Proteſtant churches? The following ones may be aſſigned. 1. The Greeks were ſubdued by the authority of an impoſtor, who, in the ſixth century, aſſumed the character of Dionyſius the Areopagite. 2. A juſt apprehenſion, that the grammarians might become more important than the theologians, engaged the council of Trent to fix the ſeal of their infallibility on all the books of Scripture, contained in the Latin Vulgate, in the number of which the Apocalypſe was fortunately included. (Fra Paolo, Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. ii.) 3. The advantage of turning thoſe myſterious prophecies againſt the See of Rome, inſpired the proteſtants with uncommon veneration for ſo uſeful an ally. See the ingenious and elegant diſcourſes of the preſent biſhop of Litchfield on that unpromiſing ſubject.

[68] Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. vii. 15, &c.) relates the diſmal tale of futurity with great ſpirit and eloquence.

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of the Eaſt, the philoſophy of the Stoics, and the analogy of Nature; and even the country, which, from religious motives, had been choſen for the origin and principal ſcene of the conflagration, was the beſt adapted for that purpoſe by natural and phyſical cauſes; by its deep caverns, beds of ſulphur, and numerous volcanoes, of which thoſe of Ætna, of Veſuvius, and of Lipari, exhibit a very imperfect repreſentation. The calmeſt and moſt intrepid ſceptic could not refuſe to acknowledge, that the deſtruction of the preſent ſyſtem of the world by fire, was in itſelf extremely probable. The Chriſtian, who founded his belief much leſs on the fallacious arguments of reaſon than on the authority of tradition and the interpretation of ſcripture, expected it with terror and confidence as a certain and approaching event; and as his mind was perpetually filled with the ſolemn idea, he conſidered every diſaſter that happened to the empire as an infallible ſymptom of an expiring world [69],

The Pagans devoted to eternal puniſhment.

The condemnation of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous of the Pagans, on account of their ignorance or diſbelief of the divine truth, ſeems to offend the reaſon and the humanity of the preſent age [70]. But the primitive church, whoſe faith was of a much firmer conſiſtence, delivered over, without heſitation, to eternal torture, the far greater part of the human ſpecies. A charitable hope might perhaps be indulged in favour of Socrates, or ſome other ſages of antiquity, who had conſulted the light of reaſon before that of the goſpel had

[69] On this ſubject every reader of taſte will be entertained with the third part of Burnet's Sacred Theory. He blends philoſophy, ſcripture, and tradition, into one magnificent ſyſtem; in the deſcription of which, he diſplays a ſtrength of fancy not inferior to that of Milton himſelf.

[70] And yet whatever may be the language of individuals, it is ſtill the public doctrine of all the Chriſtian churches; nor can even our own refuſe to admit the concluſions which muſt be drawn from the viiith and the xviiith of her Articles. The Janſeniſts, who have ſo diligently ſtudied the works of the fathers, maintain this ſentiment with diſtinguiſhed zeal, and the learned M. de Tillemont never diſmiſſes a virtuous emperor without pronouncing his damnation. Zuinglius is perhaps the only leader of a party who has ever adopted the milder ſentiment, and he gave no leſs offence to the Lutherans than to the Catholics. See Boſſuet, Hiſtoire des Variations des Egliſes Proteſtantes, l. ii. c. 19—22.

ariſen.

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ariſen". But it was unanimouſly affirmed, that thoſe who, ſince the birth or the death of Chriſt, had obſtinately perſiſted in the worſhip of the dæmons, neither deſerved nor could expect a pardon from the irritated juſtice of the Deity. Theſe rigid ſentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infuſed a ſpirit of bitterneſs into a ſyſtem of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendſhip were frequently torn aſunder by the difference of religious faith; and the Chriſtians, who, in this world, found themſelves oppreſſed by the power of the Pagans, were ſometimes ſeduced by reſentment and ſpiritual pride to delight in the proſpect of their future triumph. "You are fond of ſpectacles," exclaims the ſtern Tertullian, "expect the greateſt of all ſpectacles, "the laſt and eternal judgment of the univerſe. How ſhall I ad- "mire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold ſo "many proud monarchs, and fancied gods, groaning in the loweſt "abyſs of darkneſs; ſo many magiſtrates who perſecuted the name "of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled "againſt the Chriſtians; ſo many ſage philoſophers bluſhing in red "hot flames with their deluded ſcholars; ſo many celebrated poets "trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Chriſt; ſo "many tragedians, more tuneful in the expreſſion of their own "ſufferings; ſo many dancers—" But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the reſt of this infernal deſcription, which the zealous African purſues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticiſms[72].

[71] Juſtin and Clemens of Alexandria allow that ſome of the philoſophers were inſtructed by the Logos; confounding its double ſignification, of the human reaſon, and of the Divine Word.

[72] Tertullian, De Spectaculis, c. 30. In order to aſcertain the degree of authority which the zealous African had acquired, it may be ſufficient to allege the teſtimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the weſtern churches. (See Prudent. Hymn. xiii. 100.) As often as he applied himſelf to his daily ſtudy of the writings of Tertullian, he was accuſtomed to ſay, "*Da mihi magiſtrum*; Give me my maſter." (Hieronym. de Viris Illuſtribus, tom. i. p. 284.)

Doubtleſs

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Were often converted by their fears.

Doubtleſs there were many among the primitive Chriſtians of a temper more ſuitable to the meekneſs and charity of their profeſſion. There were many who felt a ſincere compaſſion for the danger of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the moſt benevolent zeal to ſave them from the impending deſtruction. The careleſs Polytheiſt, aſſailed by new and unexpected terrors, againſt which neither his prieſts nor his philoſophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and ſubdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might aſſiſt the progreſs of his faith and reaſon; and if he could once perſuade himſelf to ſuſpect that the Chriſtian religion might poſſibly be true, it became an eaſy taſk to convince him that it was the ſafeſt and moſt prudent party that he could poſſibly embrace.

The Third Cause. Miraculous powers of the primitive church.

III. The ſupernatural gifts, which even in this life were aſcribed to the Chriſtians above the reſt of mankind, muſt have conduced to their own comfort, and very frequently to the conviction of infidels. Beſides the occaſional prodigies, which might ſometimes be effected by the immediate interpoſition of the Deity when he ſuſpended the laws of Nature for the ſervice of religion, the Chriſtian church, from the time of the apoſtles and their firſt diſciples[73], has claimed an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of viſion and of prophecy, the power of expelling dæmons, of healing the ſick, and of raiſing the dead. The knowledge of foreign languages was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himſelf was left to ſtruggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect whilſt he preached the goſpel to the natives of Gaul[74]. The divine inſpiration, whether it was conveyed in the form of a waking or of a ſleeping viſion, is

[73] Notwithſtanding the evaſions of Dr. Middleton, it is impoſſible to overlook the clear traces of viſions and inſpiration, which may be found in the apoſtolic fathers.

[74] Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. Proem. p. 3. Dr. Middleton (Free Inquiry, p. 96, &c.) obſerves, that as this pretenſion of all others was the moſt difficult to ſupport by art, it was the ſooneſt given up. The obſervation ſuits his hypotheſis.

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deſcribed as a favour very liberally beſtowed on all ranks of the faithful, on women as on elders, on boys as well as upon biſhops. When their devout minds were ſufficiently prepared by a courſe of prayer, of faſting, and of vigils, to receive the extraordinary impulſe, they were tranſported out of their ſenſes, and delivered in extaſy what was inſpired, being mere organs of the holy ſpirit, juſt as a pipe or flute is of him who blows into it[75]. We may add, that the deſign of theſe viſions was, for the moſt part, either to diſcloſe the future hiſtory, or to guide the preſent adminiſtration of the church. The expulſion of the dæmons from the bodies of thoſe unhappy perſons whom they had been permitted to torment, was conſidered as a ſignal though ordinary triumph of religion, and is repeatedly alleged by the ancient apologiſts, as the moſt convincing evidence of the truth of Chriſtianity. The awful ceremony was uſually performed in a public manner, and in the preſence of a great number of ſpectators; the patient was relieved by the power or ſkill of the exorciſt, and the vanquiſhed dæmon was heard to confeſs, that he was one of the fabled gods of antiquity, who had impiouſly uſurped the adoration of mankind[76]. But the miraculous cure of diſeaſes of the moſt inveterate or even preternatural kind, can no longer occaſion any ſurpriſe, when we recollect, that in the days of Irenæus, about the end of the ſecond century, the reſurrection of the dead was very far from being eſteemed an uncommon event; that the miracle was frequently performed on neceſſary occaſions, by great faſting and the joint ſupplication of the church of the place, and that the perſons thus reſtored to their

[75] Athenagoras in Legatione. Juſtin Martyr, Cohort. ad Gentes. Tertullian adverſ. Marcionit. l. iv. Theſe deſcriptions are not very unlike the prophetic fury, for which Cicero (de Divinat. ii. 54.) expreſſes ſo little reverence.

[76] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 23.) throws out a bold defiance to the Pagan magiſtrates. Of the primitive miracles, the power of exorciſing, is the only one which has been aſſumed by Proteſtants.

prayers,

prayers, had lived afterwards among them many years [77]. At ſuch a period, when faith could boaſt of ſo many wonderful victories over death, it ſeems difficult to account for the ſcepticiſm of thoſe philoſophers, who ſtill rejected and derided the doctrine of the reſurrection. A noble Grecian had reſted on this important ground the whole controverſy, and promiſed Theophilus, biſhop of Antioch, that if he could be gratified with the ſight of a ſingle perſon who had been actually raiſed from the dead, he would immediately embrace the Chriſtian religion. It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the prelate of the firſt eaſtern church, however anxious for the converſion of his friend, thought proper to decline this fair and reaſonable challenge [78].

Their truth conteſted.

The miracles of the primitive church, after obtaining the ſanction of ages, have been lately attacked in a very free and ingenious inquiry [79]; which, though it has met with the moſt favourable reception from the Public, appears to have excited a general ſcandal among the divines of our own as well as of the other proteſtant churches of Europe [80]. Our different ſentiments on this ſubject will be much leſs influenced by any particular arguments, than by our habits of ſtudy and reflection; and above all, by the degree of the evidence which we have accuſtomed ourſelves to require for the proof of a miraculous event. The duty of an hiſtorian does not call upon him to interpoſe his private judgment in this nice and important controverſy; but he ought not to diſſemble the difficulty of adopting ſuch a theory as may reconcile the intereſt

Our perplexity in defining the miraculous period.

[77] Irenæus adv. Hæreſes, l. ii. 56, 57. l. v. c. 6. Mr. Dodwell (Diſſert. ad Irenæum, ii. 42.) concludes, that the ſecond century was ſtill more fertile in miracles than the firſt.

[78] Theophilus ad Autolycum, l. i. p. 345. Edit. Benedictin. Paris, 1742.

[79] Dr. Middleton ſent out his Introduction in the year 1747, publiſhed his Free Inquiry in 1749, and before his death, which happened in 1750, he had prepared a vindication of it againſt his numerous adverſaries.

[80] The univerſity of Oxford conferred degrees on his opponents. From the indignation of Moſheim (p. 221.), we may diſcover the ſentiments of the Lutheran divines.

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of religion with that of reaſon, of making a proper application of that theory, and of defining with preciſion the limits of that happy period exempt from error and from deceit, to which we might be diſpoſed to extend the gift of ſupernatural powers. From the firſt of the fathers to the laſt of the popes, a ſucceſſion of biſhops, of ſaints, of martyrs, and of miracles, is continued without interruption, and the progreſs of ſuperſtition was ſo gradual and almoſt imperceptible, that we know not in what particular link we ſhould break the chain of tradition. Every age bears teſtimony to the wonderful events by which it was diſtinguiſhed, and its teſtimony appears no leſs weighty and reſpectable than that of the preceding generation, till we are inſenſibly led on to accuſe our own inconſiſtency, if in the eighth or in the twelfth century we deny to the venerable Bede, or to the holy Bernard, the ſame degree of confidence which, in the ſecond century, we had ſo liberally granted to Juſtin or to Irenæus[81]. If the truth of any of thoſe miracles is appreciated by their apparent uſe and propriety, every age had unbelievers to convince, heretics to confute, and idolatrous nations to convert; and ſufficient motives might always be produced to juſtify the interpoſition of Heaven. And yet ſince every friend to revelation is perſuaded of the reality, and every reaſonable man is convinced of the ceſſation, of miraculous powers, it is evident that there muſt have been *ſome period* in which they were either ſuddenly or gradually withdrawn from the Chriſtian church. Whatever æra is choſen for that purpoſe, the death of the apoſtles, the converſion of the Roman empire, or the extinction of the Arian hereſy[82], the inſenſibility of the Chriſtians who lived at that time will

[81] It may ſeem ſomewhat remarkable, that Bernard of Clairvaux, who records ſo many miracles of his friend St. Malachi, never takes any notice of his own, which, in their turn, however, are carefully related by his companions and diſciples. In the long ſeries of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, does there exiſt a ſingle inſtance of a ſaint aſſerting that he himſelf poſſeſſed the gift of miracles?

[82] The converſion of Conſtantine is the æra

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will equally afford a juſt matter of ſurpriſe. They ſtill ſupported their pretenſions after they had loſt their power. Credulity performed the office of faith; fanaticiſm was permitted to aſſume the language of inſpiration, and the effects of accident or contrivance were aſcribed to ſupernatural cauſes. The recent experience of genuine miracles ſhould have inſtructed the Chriſtian world in the ways of providence, and habituated their eye (if we may uſe a very inadequate expreſſion) to the ſtyle of the divine artiſt. Should the moſt ſkilful painter of modern Italy preſume to decorate his feeble imitations with the name of Raphael or of Correggio, the inſolent fraud would be ſoon diſcovered and indignantly rejected.

Uſe of the primitive miracles.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the miracles of the primitive church ſince the time of the apoſtles, this unreſiſting ſoftneſs of temper, ſo conſpicuous among the believers of the ſecond and third centuries, proved of ſome accidental benefit to the cauſe of truth and religion. In modern times, a latent and even involuntary ſcepticiſm adheres to the moſt pious diſpoſitions. Their admiſſion of ſupernatural truths is much leſs an active conſent, than a cold and paſſive acquieſcence. Accuſtomed long ſince to obſerve and to reſpect the invariable order of Nature, our reaſon, or at leaſt our imagination, is not ſufficiently prepared to ſuſtain the viſible action of the Deity. But, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, the ſituation of mankind was extremely different. The moſt curious, or the moſt credulous, among the Pagans, were often perſuaded to enter into a ſociety, which aſſerted an actual claim of miraculous powers. The primitive Chriſtians perpetually trod on myſtic ground, and their minds were exerciſed by the habits of believing the moſt extraordinary events. They felt, or they fancied, that on every ſide they were inceſſantly aſſaulted by dæmons, comforted by viſions, in-

æra which is moſt uſually fixed by proteſtants. The more rational divines are unwilling to admit the miracles of the ivth, whilſt the more credulous are unwilling to reject thoſe of the vth century.

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ſtructed by prophecy, and ſurpriſingly delivered from danger, ſickneſs, and from death itſelf, by the ſupplications of the church. The real or imaginary prodigies, of which they ſo frequently conceived themſelves to be the objects, the inſtruments, or the ſpectators, very happily diſpoſed them to adopt with the ſame eaſe, but with far greater juſtice, the authentic wonders of the evangelic hiſtory; and thus miracles that exceeded not the meaſure of their own experience, inſpired them with the moſt lively aſſurance of myſteries which were acknowledged to ſurpaſs the limits of their underſtanding. It is this deep impreſſion of ſupernatural truths, which has been ſo much celebrated under the name of faith; a ſtate of mind deſcribed as the ſureſt pledge of the divine favour and of future felicity, and recommended as the firſt or perhaps the only merit of a Chriſtian. According to the more rigid doctors, the moral virtues, which may be equally practiſed by infidels, are deſtitute of any value or efficacy in the work of our juſtification.

THE FOURTH CAUSE. Virtues of the firſt Chriſtians.

IV. But the primitive Chriſtian demonſtrated his faith by his virtues; and it was very juſtly ſuppoſed that the divine perſuaſion which enlightened or ſubdued the underſtanding, muſt, at the ſame time, purify the heart and direct the actions of the believer. The firſt apologiſts of Chriſtianity who juſtify the innocence of their brethren, and the writers of a later period who celebrate the ſanctity of their anceſtors, diſplay, in the moſt lively colours, the reformation of manners which was introduced into the world by the preaching of the goſpel. As it is my intention to remark only ſuch human cauſes as were permitted to ſecond the influence of revelation, I ſhall ſlightly mention two motives which might naturally render the lives of the primitive Chriſtians much purer and more auſtere than thoſe of their Pagan contemporaries, or their degenerate ſucceſſors; repentance for their paſt ſins, and the laudable deſire of ſupporting the reputation of the ſociety in which they were engaged.

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Effects of their repentance.

It is a very ancient reproach, ſuggeſted by the ignorance or the malice of infidelity, that the Chriſtians allured into their party the moſt atrocious criminals, who, as ſoon as they were touched by a ſenſe of remorſe, were eaſily perſuaded to waſh away, in the water of baptiſm, the guilt of their paſt conduct, for which the temples of the gods refuſed to grant them any expiation. But this reproach, when it is cleared from miſrepreſentation, contributes as much to the honour as it did to the increaſe of the church [83]. The friends of Chriſtianity may acknowledge without a bluſh, that many of the moſt eminent ſaints had been before their baptiſm the moſt abandoned ſinners. Thoſe perſons, who in the world had followed, though in an imperfect manner, the dictates of benevolence and propriety, derived ſuch a calm ſatisfaction from the opinion of their own rectitude, as rendered them much leſs ſuſceptible of the ſudden emotions of ſhame, of grief, and of terror, which have given birth to ſo many wonderful converſions. After the example of their Divine Maſter, the miſſionaries of the goſpel diſdained not the ſociety of men, and eſpecially of women, oppreſſed by the conſciouſneſs, and very often by the effects, of their vices. As they emerged from ſin and ſuperſtition to the glorious hope of immortality, they reſolved to devote themſelves to a life, not only of virtue, but of penitence. The deſire of perfection became the ruling paſſion of their ſoul; and it is well known, that while reaſon embraces a cold mediocrity, our paſſions hurry us, with rapid violence, over the ſpace which lies between the moſt oppoſite extremes.

Care of their reputation.

When the new converts had been enrolled in the number of the faithful, and were admitted to the ſacraments of the church, they found themſelves reſtrained from relapſing into their paſt diſorders by another conſideration of a leſs ſpiritual, but of a very innocent and reſpectable nature. Any particular ſociety that has departed

[83] The imputations of Celſus and Julian, with the defence of the fathers, are very fairly ſtated by Spanheim, Commentaire ſur les Ceſars de Julian, p. 468.

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from the great body of the nation, or the religion to which it belonged, immediately becomes the object of univerſal as well as invidious obſervation. In proportion to the ſmallneſs of its numbers, the character of the ſociety may be affected by the virtue and vices of the perſons who compoſe it; and every member is engaged to watch with the moſt vigilant attention over his own behaviour, and over that of his brethren, ſince, as he muſt expect to incur a part of the common diſgrace, he may hope to enjoy a ſhare of the common reputation. When the Chriſtians of Bithynia were brought before the tribunal of the younger Pliny, they aſſured the proconſul, that, far from being engaged in any unlawful conſpiracy, they were bound by a ſolemn obligation to abſtain from the commiſſion of thoſe crimes which diſturb the private or public peace of ſociety, from theft, robbery, adultery, perjury, and fraud [84]. Near a century afterwards, Tertullian, with an honeſt pride, could boaſt, that very few Chriſtians had ſuffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion [85]. Their ſerious and ſequeſtered life, averſe to the gay luxury of the age, inured them to chaſtity, temperance, œconomy, and all the ſober and domeſtic virtues. As the greater number were of ſome trade or profeſſion, it was incumbent on them, by the ſtricteſt integrity and the faireſt dealing, to remove the ſuſpicions which the profane are too apt to conceive againſt the appearances of ſanctity. The contempt of the world exerciſed them in the habits of humility, meekneſs, and patience. The more they were perſecuted, the more cloſely they adhered to each other. Their mutual charity and unſuſpecting confidence has been remarked by infidels, and was too often abuſed by perfidious friends [86].

[84] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 97.

[85] Tertullian, Apolog. c. 44. He adds, however, with ſome degree of heſitation, "Aut ſi aliud, jam non Chriſtianus."

[86] The philoſopher Peregrinus (of whoſe life and death Lucian has left us ſo entertaining an account) impoſed, for a long time, on the credulous ſimplicity of the Chriſtians of Aſia.

It

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Morality of the fathers.

It is a very honourable circumſtance for the morals of the primitive Chriſtians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an exceſs of virtue. The biſhops and doctors of the church, whoſe evidence atteſts, and whoſe authority might influence, the profeſſions, the principles, and even the practice, of their contemporaries, had ſtudied the ſcriptures with leſs ſkill than devotion, and they often received, in the moſt literal ſenſe, thoſe rigid precepts of Chriſt and the apoſtles, to which the prudence of ſucceeding commentators has applied a looſer and more figurative mode of interpretation. Ambitious to exalt the perfection of the goſpel above the wiſdom of philoſophy, the zealous fathers have carried the duties of ſelf-mortification, of purity, and of patience, to a height which it is ſcarcely poſſible to attain, and much leſs to preſerve, in our preſent ſtate of weakneſs and corruption. A doctrine ſo extraordinary and ſo ſublime muſt inevitably command the veneration of the people; but it was ill calculated to obtain the ſuffrage of thoſe worldly philoſophers, who, in the conduct of this tranſitory life, conſult only the feelings of nature and the intereſt of ſociety [87].

Principles of human nature.

There are two very natural propenſities which we may diſtinguiſh in the moſt virtuous and liberal diſpoſitions, the love of pleaſure and the love of action. If the former is refined by art and learning, improved by the charms of ſocial intercourſe, and corrected by a juſt regard to œconomy, to health, and to reputation, it is productive of the greateſt part of the happineſs of private life. The love of action is a principle of a much ſtronger and more doubtful nature. It often leads to anger, to ambition, and to revenge; but when it is guided by the ſenſe of propriety and benevolence, it becomes the parent of every virtue; and if thoſe virtues are accompanied with equal abilities, a family, a ſtate, or an

[87] See a very judicious treatiſe of Barbeyrac ſur la Morale des Peres.

empire,

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empire, may be indebted for their ſafety and proſperity to the undaunted courage of a ſingle man. To the love of pleaſure we may therefore aſcribe moſt of the agreeable, to the love of action we may attribute moſt of the uſeful and reſpectable, qualifications. The character in which both the one and the other ſhould be united and harmoniſed, would ſeem to conſtitute the moſt perfect idea of human nature. The inſenſible and inactive diſpoſition, which ſhould be ſuppoſed alike deſtitute of both, would be rejected, by the common conſent of mankind, as utterly incapable of procuring any happineſs to the individual, or any public benefit to the world. But it was not in *this* world that the primitive Chriſtians were deſirous of making themſelves either agreeable or uſeful.

The primitive Chriſtians condemn pleaſure and luxury.

The acquiſition of knowledge, the exerciſe of our reaſon or fancy, and the cheerful flow of unguarded converſation, may employ the leiſure of a liberal mind. Such amuſements, however, were rejected with abhorrence, or admitted with the utmoſt caution, by the ſeverity of the fathers, who deſpiſed all knowledge that was not uſeful to ſalvation, and who conſidered all levity of diſcourſe as a criminal abuſe of the gift of ſpeech. In our preſent ſtate of exiſtence, the body is ſo inſeparably connected with the ſoul, that it ſeems to be our intereſt to taſte, with innocence and moderation, the enjoyments of which that faithful companion is ſuſceptible. Very different was the reaſoning of our devout predeceſſors; vainly aſpiring to imitate the perfection of angels, they diſdained, or they affected to diſdain, every earthly and corporeal delight[28]. Some of our ſenſes indeed are neceſſary for our preſervation, others for our ſubſiſtence, and others again for our information, and thus far it was impoſſible to reject the uſe of them. The firſt ſenſation

[28] Lactant. Inſtitut. Divin. l. vi. c. 20, 21, 22.

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of pleaſure was marked as the firſt moment of their abuſe. The unfeeling candidate for Heaven was inſtructed, not only to reſiſt the groſſer allurements of the taſte or ſmell, but even to ſhut his ears againſt the profane harmony of ſounds, and to view with indifference the moſt finiſhed productions of human art. Gay apparel, magnificent houſes, and elegant furniture, were ſuppoſed to unite the double guilt of pride and of ſenſuality: a ſimple and mortified appearance was more ſuitable to the Chriſtian who was certain of his ſins and doubtful of his ſalvation. In their cenſures of luxury, the fathers are extremely minute and circumſtantial[89]; and among the various articles which excite their pious indignation, we may enumerate falſe hair, garments of any colour except white, inſtruments of muſic, vaſes of gold or ſilver, downy pillows (as Jacob repoſed his head on a ſtone), white bread, foreign wines, public ſalutations, the uſe of warm baths, and the practice of ſhaving the beard, which, according to the expreſſion of Tertullian, is a lie againſt our own faces, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator[90]. When Chriſtianity was introduced among the rich and the polite, the obſervation of theſe ſingular laws was left, as it would be at preſent, to the few who were ambitious of ſuperior ſanctity. But it is always eaſy, as well as agreeable, for the inferior ranks of mankind to claim a merit from the contempt of that pomp and pleaſure, which fortune has placed beyond their reach. The virtue of the primitive Chriſtians, like that of the firſt Romans, was very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance.

Their ſentiments concerning marriage and chaſtity.

The chaſte ſeverity of the fathers, in whatever related to the commerce of the two ſexes, flowed from the ſame principle; their abhorrence of every enjoyment, which might gratify the ſenſual,

[89] Conſult a work of Clemens of Alexandria, intitled the Pædagogue, which contains the rudiments of ethics, as they were taught in the moſt celebrated of the Chriſtian ſchools.

[90] Tertullian, de Spectaculis, c. 23. Clemens Alexandrin. Pædagog. l. iii. c. 8.

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and degrade the ſpiritual, nature of man. It was their favourite opinion, that if Adam had preſerved his obedience to the Creator, he would have lived for ever in a ſtate of virgin purity, and that ſome harmleſs mode of vegetation might have peopled paradiſe with a race of innocent and immortal beings[91]. The uſe of marriage was permitted only to his fallen poſterity, as a neceſſary expedient to continue the human ſpecies, and as a reſtraint, however imperfect, on the natural licentiouſneſs of deſire. The heſitation of the orthodox caſuiſts on this intereſting ſubject, betrays the perplexity of men, unwilling to approve an inſtitution, which they were compelled to tolerate[92]. The enumeration of the very whimſical laws, which they moſt circumſtantially impoſed on the marriage-bed, would force a ſmile from the young, and a bluſh from the fair. It was their unanimous ſentiment, that a firſt marriage was adequate to all the purpoſes of nature and of ſociety. The ſenſual connexion was refined into a reſemblance of the myſtic union of Chriſt with his church, and was pronounced to be indiſſoluble either by divorce or by death. The practice of ſecond nuptials was branded with the name of a legal adultery; and the perſons who were guilty of ſo ſcandalous an offence againſt Chriſtian purity, were ſoon excluded from the honours, and even from the alms, of the church[93]. Since deſire was imputed as a crime, and marriage was tolerated as a defect, it was conſiſtent with the ſame principles to conſider a ſtate of celibacy as the neareſt approach to the Divine perfection. It was with the utmoſt difficulty that ancient Rome could ſupport the inſtitution of ſix veſtals[94]; but the primitive church

[91] Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique du Manicheiſme, l. vii. c. 3. Juſtin, Gregory of Nyſſa, Auguſtin, &c. ſtrongly inclined to this opinion.

[92] Some of the Gnoſtic heretics were more conſiſtent; they rejected the uſe of marriage.

[93] See a chain of tradition, from Juſtin Martyr to Jerome, in the Morale des Peres; c. iv. 6—26.

[94] See a very curious Diſſertation on the Veſtals, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. iv. p. 161—227. Notwithſtanding

church was filled with a great number of perſons of either ſex, who had devoted themſelves to the profeſſion of perpetual chaſtity[95]. A few of theſe, among whom we may reckon the learned Origen, judged it the moſt prudent to diſarm the temper[96]. Some were inſenſible and ſome were invincible againſt the aſſaults of the fleſh. Diſdaining an ignominious flight, the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the cloſeſt engagement; they permitted prieſts and deacons to ſhare their bed, and gloried amidſt the flames in their unſullied purity. But inſulted Nature ſometimes vindicated her rights, and this new ſpecies of martyrdom ſerved only to introduce a new ſcandal into the church[97]. Among the Chriſtian aſcetics, however (a name which they ſoon acquired from their painful exerciſe), many, as they were leſs preſumptuous, were probably more ſucceſsful. The loſs of ſenſual pleaſure was ſupplied and compenſated by ſpiritual pride. Even the multitude of Pagans were inclined to eſtimate the merit of the ſacrifice by its apparent difficulty; and it was in the praiſe of theſe chaſte ſpouſes of Chriſt that the fathers have poured forth the troubled ſtream of their eloquence[98]. Such are the early traces of monaſtic principles and inſtitutions, which, in a ſubſequent age, have counterbalanced all the temporal advantages of Chriſtianity[99].

ſtanding the honours and rewards which were beſtowed on thoſe virgins, it was difficult to procure a ſufficient number; nor could the dread of the moſt horrible death always reſtrain their incontinence.

[95] Cupiditatem procreandi aut unam ſcimus aut nullam. Minucius Fælix, c. 31. Juſtin. Apolog. Major. Athenagoras in Legat. c. 28. Tertullian de Cultu Fœmin. l. ii.

[96] Euſebius, l. vi. 8. Before the fame of Origen had excited envy and perſecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than cenſured. As it was his general practice to allegorize ſcripture; it ſeems unfortunate that, in this inſtance only, he ſhould have adopted the literal ſenſe.

[97] Cyprian. Epiſtol. 4. and Dodwell Diſſertat. Cyprianic. iii. Something like this raſh attempt was long afterwards imputed to the founder of the order of Fontevrault. Bayle has amuſed himſelf and his readers on that very delicate ſubject.

[98] Dupin (Bibliothéque Eccleſiaſtique, tom. i. p. 195.) gives a particular account of the dialogue of the ten virgins, as it was compoſed by Methodius, biſhop of Tyre. The praiſes of virginity are exceſſive.

[99] The Aſcetics (as early as the ſecond century) made a public profeſſion of mortifying their bodies, and of abſtaining from the uſe of fleſh and wine. Moſheim, p. 310.

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Their averſion to the buſineſs of war and government.

The Chriſtians were not leſs averſe to the buſineſs than to the pleaſures of this world. The defence of our perſons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveneſs of paſt injuries, and commanded them to invite the repetition of freſh inſults. Their ſimplicity was offended by the uſe of oaths, by the pomp of magiſtracy, and by the active contention of public life, nor could their humane ignorance be convinced, that it was lawful on any occaſion to ſhed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the ſword of juſtice, or by that of war; even though their criminal or hoſtile attempts ſhould threaten the peace and ſafety of the whole community[100]. It was acknowledged, that, under a leſs perfect law, the powers of the Jewiſh conſtitution had been exerciſed, with the approbation of Heaven, by inſpired prophets and by anointed kings. The Chriſtians felt and confeſſed, that ſuch inſtitutions might be neceſſary for the preſent ſyſtem of the world, and they cheerfully ſubmitted to the authority of their Pagan governors. But while they inculcated the maxims of paſſive obedience, they refuſed to take any active part in the civil adminiſtration or the military defence of the empire. Some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to thoſe perſons who, before their converſion, were already engaged in ſuch violent and ſanguinary occupations[101]; but it was impoſſible that the Chriſtians, without renouncing a more ſacred duty, could aſſume the character of ſoldiers, of magiſtrates, or of princes[102]. This indolent, or even criminal diſregard to the public welfare,

[100] See the Morale des Peres. The ſame patient principles have been revived ſince the Reformation by the Socinians, the modern Anabaptiſts, and the Quakers. Barclay, the apologiſt of the Quakers, has protected his brethren, by the authority of the primitive Chriſtians, p. 542–549.

[101] Tertullian, Apolog. c. 21. De Idolatriâ, c. 17, 18. Origen contra Celſum, l. v. p. 253. l. vii. p. 348. l. viii. p. 423–428.

[102] Tertullian (de Corona Militis, c. 11.) ſuggeſts to them the expedient of deſerting; a counſel, which, if it had been generally known, was not very proper to conciliate the favour of the emperors towards the Chriſtian ſect.

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expoſed them to the contempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently aſked, what muſt be the fate of the empire, attacked on every ſide by the barbarians, if all mankind ſhould adopt the puſillanimous ſentiments of the new ſect [103]? To this inſulting queſtion the Chriſtian apologiſts returned obſcure and ambiguous anſwers, as they were unwilling to reveal the ſecret cauſe of their ſecurity; the expectation that, before the converſion of mankind was accompliſhed, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itſelf, would be no more. It may be obſerved, that, in this inſtance likewiſe, the ſituation of the firſt Chriſtians coincided very happily with their religious ſcruples, and that their averſion to an active life contributed rather to excuſe them from the ſervice, than to exclude them from the honours, of the ſtate and army.

The Fifth Cauſe. The Chriſtians active in the government of the church.

V. But the human character, however it may be exalted or depreſſed by a temporary enthuſiaſm, will return by degrees to its proper and natural level, and will reſume thoſe paſſions that ſeem the moſt adapted to its preſent condition. The primitive Chriſtians were dead to the buſineſs and pleaſures of the world; but their love of action, which could never be entirely extinguiſhed, ſoon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the church. A ſeparate ſociety, which attacked the eſtabliſhed religion of the empire, was obliged to adopt ſome form of internal policy, and to appoint a ſufficient number of miniſters, intruſted not only with the ſpiritual functions, but even with the temporal direction of the Chriſtian commonwealth. The ſafety of that ſociety, its honour, its aggrandiſement, were productive, even in the moſt pious minds, of a ſpirit of patriotiſm, ſuch as the firſt of the Romans had felt for the republic, and ſometimes, of a ſimilar indifference, in the uſe of whatever means might probably conduce

[103] As well as we can judge from the mutilated repreſentation of Origen (l. viii. p. 423.), his adverſary, Celſus, had urged his objection with great force and candour.

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to ſo deſirable an end. The ambition of raiſing themſelves or their friends to the honours and offices of the church, was diſguiſed by the laudable intention of devoting to the public benefit, the power and conſideration, which, for that purpoſe only, it became their duty to ſolicit. In the exerciſe of their functions, they were frequently called upon to detect the errors of hereſy, or the arts of faction, to oppoſe the deſigns of perfidious brethren, to ſtigmatize their characters with deſerved infamy, and to expel them from the boſom of a ſociety, whoſe peace and happineſs they had attempted to diſturb. The eccleſiaſtical governors of the Chriſtians were taught to unite the wiſdom of the ſerpent with the innocence of the dove; but as the former was refined, ſo the latter was inſenſibly corrupted, by the habits of government. In the church as well as in the world, the perſons who were placed in any public ſtation rendered themſelves conſiderable by their eloquence and firmneſs, by their knowledge of mankind, and by their dexterity in buſineſs, and while they concealed from others, and perhaps from themſelves, the ſecret motives of their conduct, they too frequently relapſed into all the turbulent paſſions of active life, which were tinctured with an additional degree of bitterneſs and obſtinacy from the infuſion of ſpiritual zeal.

Its primitive freedom and equality.

The government of the church has often been the ſubject as well as the prize of religious contention. The hoſtile diſputants of Rome, of Paris, of Oxford, and of Geneva, have alike ſtruggled to reduce the primitive and apoſtolic model[104], to the reſpective ſtandards of their own policy. The few who have purſued this inquiry with more candour and impartiality, are of opinion[105],

[104] The Ariſtocratical party, in France, as well as in England, has ſtrenuouſly maintained the divine origin of biſhops. But the Calviniſtical preſbyters were impatient of a ſuperior; and the Roman Pontiff refuſed to acknowledge an equal. See Fra Paolo.

[105] In the hiſtory of the Chriſtian hierarchy, I have, for the moſt part, followed the learned and candid Moſheim.

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that the apoſtles declined the office of legiſlation, and rather choſe to endure ſome partial ſcandals and diviſions, than to exclude the Chriſtians of a future age from the liberty of varying their forms of eccleſiaſtical government according to the changes of times and circumſtances. The ſcheme of policy, which, under their approbation, was adopted for the uſe of the firſt century, may be diſcovered from the practice of Jeruſalem, of Epheſus, or of Corinth. The ſocieties which were inſtituted in the cities of the Roman empire, were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the baſis of their internal conſtitution. The want of diſcipline and human learning was ſupplied by the occaſional aſſiſtance of the *prophets*[106], who were called to that function without diſtinction of age, of ſex, or of natural abilities, and who, as often as they felt the divine impulſe, poured forth the effuſions of the ſpirit in the aſſembly of the faithful. But theſe extraordinary gifts were frequently abuſed or miſapplied by the prophetic teachers. They diſplayed them at an improper ſeaſon, preſumptuouſly diſturbed the ſervice of the aſſembly, and by their pride or miſtaken zeal they introduced, particularly into the apoſtolic church of Corinth, a long and melancholy train of diſorders[107]. As the inſtitution of prophets became uſeleſs, and even pernicious, their powers were withdrawn, and their office aboliſhed. The public functions of religion were ſolely intruſted to the eſtabliſhed miniſters of the church, the *biſhops* and the *preſbyters*; two appellations which, in their firſt origin, appear to have diſtinguiſhed the ſame office and the ſame order of perſons. The name of Preſbyter was expreſſive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wiſdom. The title of Biſhop denoted their inſpection over the faith

[106] For the prophets of the primitive church, ſee Moſheim, Diſſertationes ad Hiſt. Eccleſ. pertinentes, tom. ii. p. 132–208.

[107] See the epiſtles of St. Paul, and of Clemens, to the Corinthians.

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and manners of the Chriſtians who were committed to their paſtoral care. In proporton to the reſpective numbers of the faithful, a larger or ſmaller number of theſe *epiſcopal preſbyters* guided each infant congregation with equal authority, and with united counſels [108].

Inſtitution of biſhops as preſidents of the college of preſbyters.

But the moſt perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a ſuperior magiſtrate; and the order of public deliberations ſoon introduces the office of a preſident, inveſted at leaſt with the authority of collecting the ſentiments, and of executing the reſolutions, of the aſſembly. A regard for the public tranquillity, which would ſo frequently have been interrupted by annual or by occaſional elections, induced the primitive Chriſtians to conſtitute an honourable and perpetual magiſtracy, and to chooſe one of the wiſeſt and moſt holy among their preſbyters to execute, during his life, the duties of their eccleſiaſtical governor. It was under theſe circumſtances that the lofty title of Biſhop began to raiſe itſelf above the humble appellation of preſbyter; and while the latter remained the moſt natural diſtinction for the members of every Chriſtian ſenate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new preſident [109]. The advantages of this epiſcopal form of government, which appears to have been introduced before the end of the firſt century [110], were ſo obvious, and ſo important for the future greatneſs, as well as the preſent peace, of Chriſtianity, that it was adopted without delay by all the ſocieties which were already ſcattered over the em-

[108] Hooker's Eccleſiaſtical Polity, l. vii.

[109] See Jerome ad Titum, c. 1. and Epiſtol. 85. (in the Benedictine edition, 101.) and the elaborate apology of Blondel, pro ſententia Hieronymi. The ancient ſtate, as it is deſcribed by Jerome, of the biſhop and preſbyters of Alexandria, receives a remarkable confirmation from the patriarch Eutichius (Annal. tom. i. p. 330. Verſ. Pocock); whoſe teſtimony I know not how to reject, in ſpite of all the objections of the learned Pearſon, in his Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part i. c. 11.

[110] See the introduction to the Apocalypſe. Biſhops, under the name of angels, were already inſtituted in ſeven cities of Aſia. And yet the epiſtle of Clemens (which is probably of as ancient a date) does not lead us to diſcover any traces of epiſcopacy either at Corinth or Rome.

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pire, had acquired in a very early period the ſanction of antiquity [111], and is ſtill revered by the moſt powerful churches, both of the Eaſt and of the Weſt, as a primitive and even as a divine eſtabliſhment [112]. It is needleſs to obſerve, that the pious and humble preſbyters, who were firſt dignified with the epiſcopal title, could not poſſeſs, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircles the tiara of the Roman pontiff, or the mitre of a German prelate. But we may define, in a few words, the narrow limits of their original juriſdiction, which was chiefly of a ſpiritual, though in ſome inſtances of a temporal, nature [113]. It conſiſted in the adminiſtration of the ſacraments and diſcipline of the church, the ſuperintendency of religious ceremonies, which imperceptibly increaſed in number and variety, the conſecration of eccleſiaſtical miniſters, to whom the biſhop aſſigned their reſpective functions, the management of the public fund, and the determination of all ſuch differences as the faithful were unwilling to expoſe before the tribunal of an idolatrous judge. Theſe powers, during a ſhort period, were exerciſed according to the advice of the preſbyteral college, and with the conſent and approbation of the aſſembly of Chriſtians. The primitive biſhops were conſidered only as the firſt of their equals, and the honourable ſervants of a free people. Whenever the epiſcopal chair became vacant by death, a new preſident was choſen among the preſbyters by the ſuffrage of the whole congregation, every member of which ſuppoſed himſelf inveſted with a ſacred and ſacerdotal character [114].

Such

[111] Nulla Eccleſia ſine Epiſcopo, has been a fact as well as a maxim ſince the time of Tertullian and Irenæus.

[112] After we have paſſed the difficulties of the firſt century, we find the epiſcopal government univerſally eſtabliſhed, till it was interrupted by the republican genius of the Swiſs and German reformers.

[113] See Moſheim in the firſt and ſecond centuries. Ignatius (ad Smyrnæos, c. 3, &c.) is fond of exalting the epiſcopal dignity. Le Clerc (Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 569.) very bluntly cenſures his conduct. Moſheim, with a more critical judgment (p. 161.), ſuſpects the purity even of the ſmaller epiſtles.

[114] Nonne et Laici ſacerdotes ſumus? Tertullian,

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Provincial councils.

Such was the mild and equal conſtitution by which the Chriſtians were governed more than an hundred years after the death of the apoſtles. Every ſociety formed within itſelf a ſeparate and independent republic: and although the moſt diſtant of theſe little ſtates maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourſe of letters and deputations, the Chriſtian world was not yet connected by any ſupreme authority or legiſlative aſſembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they diſcovered the advantages that might reſult from a cloſer union of their intereſt and deſigns. Towards the end of the ſecond century, the churches of Greece and Aſia adopted the uſeful inſtitutions of provincial ſynods, and they may juſtly be ſuppoſed to have borrowed the model of a repreſentative council from the celebrated examples of their own country, the Amphictyons, the Achæan league, or the aſſemblies of the Ionian cities. It was ſoon eſtabliſhed as a cuſtom and as a law, that the biſhops of the independent churches ſhould meet in the capital of the province at the ſtated periods of ſpring and autumn. Their deliberations were aſſiſted by the advice of a few diſtinguiſhed preſbyters, and moderated by the preſence of a liſtening multitude [115]. Their decrees, which were ſtyled Canons, regulated every important controverſy of faith and diſcipline; and it was natural to believe that a liberal effuſion of the holy ſpirit would be poured on the united aſſembly of the delegates of the Chriſtian people. The inſtitution of ſynods was ſo well ſuited to private ambition and to public intereſt, that in the ſpace of a few years it was received throughout the whole empire. A regular correſpondence was eſta-

Union of the church.

tullian, Exhort. ad Caſtitat. c. 7. As the human heart is ſtill the ſame, ſeveral of the obſervations which Mr. Hume has made on Enthuſiaſm (Eſſays, vol. i. p. 76, quarto edit.), may be applied even to real inſpiration.

[115] Acta Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian. Edit. Fell, p. 158. This council was compoſed of eighty-ſeven biſhops from the provinces of Mauritania, Numidia, and Africa; ſome preſbyters and deacons aſſiſted at the aſſembly; præſente plebis maximâ parte.

bliſhed between the provincial councils, which mutually communicated and approved their reſpective proceedings; and the catholic church ſoon aſſumed the form, and acquired the ſtrength, of a great fœderative republic [116].

Progreſs of epiſcopal authority.

As the legiſlative authority of the particular churches was inſenſibly ſuperſeded by the uſe of councils, the biſhops obtained by their alliance a much larger ſhare of executive and arbitrary power; and as ſoon as they were connected by a ſenſe of their common intereſt, they were enabled to attack, with united vigour, the original rights of their clergy and people. The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of exhortation into that of command, ſcattered the ſeeds of future uſurpations, and ſupplied, by ſcripture allegories and declamatory rhetoric, their deficiency of force and of reaſon. They exalted the unity and power of the church, as it was repreſented in the EPISCOPAL OFFICE, of which every biſhop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion [117]. Princes and magiſtrates, it was often repeated, might boaſt an earthly claim to a tranſitory dominion: it was the epiſcopal authority alone which was derived from the deity, and extended itſelf over this and over another world. The biſhops were the vicegerents of Chriſt, the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, and the myſtic ſubſtitutes of the high prieſt of the Moſaic law. Their excluſive privilege of conferring the ſacerdotal character, invaded the freedom both of clerical and of popular elections; and if, in the adminiſtration of the church, they ſtill conſulted the judgment of the preſbyters, or the inclination of the people, they moſt carefully inculcated the merit of ſuch a voluntary condeſcenſion. The biſhops acknowledged the ſupreme authority which reſided in the aſſembly of their brethren; but in the govern-

[116] Aguntur præterea per Græcias illas, certis in locis concilia, &c. Tertullian de Jejuniis, c. 13. The African mentions it as a recent and foreign inſtitution. The coalition of the Chriſtian churches is very ably explained by Moſheim, p. 164—170.

[117] Cyprian, in his admired treatiſe De Unitate Eccleſiæ, p. 75—86.

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ment of his peculiar dioceſe, each of them exacted from his *flock* the ſame implicit obedience as if that favourite metaphor had been literally juſt, and as if the ſhepherd had been of a more exalted nature than that of his ſheep [118]. This obedience, however, was not impoſed without ſome efforts on one ſide, and ſome reſiſtance on the other. The democratical part of the conſtitution was, in many places, very warmly ſupported by the zealous or intereſted oppoſition of the inferior clergy. But their patriotiſm received the ignominious epithets of faction and ſchiſm; and the epiſcopal cauſe was indebted for its rapid progreſs to the labours of many active prelates, who, like Cyprian of Carthage, could reconcile the arts of the moſt ambitious ſtateſman with the Chriſtian virtues which ſeem adapted to the character of a ſaint and martyr [119].

Pre-eminence of the metropolitan churches.

The ſame cauſes which at firſt had deſtroyed the equality of the preſbyters, introduced among the biſhops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a ſuperiority of juriſdiction. As often as in the ſpring and autumn they met in provincial ſynod, the difference of perſonal merit and reputation was very ſenſibly felt among the members of the aſſembly, and the multitude was governed by the wiſdom and eloquence of the few. But the order of public proceedings required a more regular and leſs invidious diſtinction; the office of perpetual preſidents in the councils of each province, was conferred on the biſhops of the principal city, and theſe aſpiring prelates, who ſoon acquired the lofty titles of Metropolitans and Primates, ſecretly prepared themſelves to uſurp over their epiſcopal brethren the ſame authority which the biſhops had ſo lately aſſumed

[118] We may appeal to the whole tenor of Cyprian's conduct, of his doctrine and of his Epiſtles. Le Clerc, in a ſhort life of Cyprian (Bibliothéque Univerſelle, tom. xii. p. 207—378.), has laid him open with great freedom and accuracy.

[119] If Novatus, Feliciſſimus, &c. whom the biſhop of Carthage expelled from his church, and from Africa, were not the moſt deteſtable monſters of wickedneſs, the zeal of Cyprian muſt occaſionally have prevailed over his veracity. For a very juſt account of theſe obſcure quarrels, ſee Moſheim, p. 497—512.

above

above the college of preſbyters [120]. Nor was it long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the metropolitans themſelves, each of them affecting to diſplay, in the moſt pompous terms, the temporal honours and advantages of the city over which he preſided; the numbers and opulence of the Chriſtians, who were ſubject to their paſtoral care; the ſaints and martyrs who had ariſen among them, and the purity with which they preſerved the tradition of the faith, as it had been tranſmitted through a ſeries of orthodox biſhops from the apoſtle of the apoſtolic diſciple, to whom the foundation of their church was aſcribed [121]. From every cauſe either of a civil or of an eccleſiaſtical nature, it was eaſy to foreſee that Rome muſt enjoy the reſpect, and would ſoon claim the obedience, of the provinces. The ſociety of the faithful bore a juſt proportion to the capital of the empire; and the Roman church was the greateſt, the moſt numerous, and, in regard to the Weſt, the moſt ancient of all the Chriſtian eſtabliſhments, many of which had received their religion from the pious labours of her miſſionaries. Inſtead of *one* apoſtolic founder, the utmoſt boaſt of Antioch, of Epheſus, or of Corinth, the banks of the Tyber were ſuppoſed to have been honoured with the preaching and martyrdom of the *two* moſt eminent among the apoſtles [122]; and the biſhops of Rome very prudently claimed the inheritance of whatſoever prerogatives were attributed either to the perſon or to the office of St. Peter [123]. The biſhops of Italy and of the pro-

Ambition of the Roman pontiff.

[120] Moſheim, p. 269. 574. Dupin, Antiquæ Eccleſ. Diſciplin. p. 19, 20.

[121] Tertullian, in a diſtinct treatiſe, has pleaded againſt the heretics, the right of preſcription, as it was held by the apoſtolic churches.

[122] The journey of St. Peter to Rome is mentioned by moſt of the ancients (ſee Euſebius, ii. 25.), maintained by all the catholics, allowed by ſome proteſtants (ſee Pearſon and Dodwell de Succeſſ. Epiſcop. Roman.), but has been vigorouſly attacked by Spanheim (Miſcellanea Sacra, iii. 3.). According to father Hardouin, the monks of the thirteenth century, who compoſed the Æneid, repreſented St. Peter under the allegorical character of the Trojan hero.

[123] It is in French only, that the famous alluſion to St. Peter's name is exact. Tu es *Pierre* et ſur cette *pierre*.--The ſame is imperfect in Greek, Latin, Italian, &c. and totally unintelligible in our Teutonic languages.

vinces

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vinces were diſpoſed to allow them a primacy of order and aſſociation (ſuch was their very accurate expreſſion) in the Chriſtian ariſtocracy [124]. But the power of a monarch was rejected with abhorrence, and the aſpiring genius of Rome experienced from the nations of Aſia and Africa, a more vigorous reſiſtance to her ſpiritual, than ſhe had formerly done to her temporal, dominion. The patriotic Cyprian, who ruled with the moſt abſolute ſway the church of Carthage and the provincial ſynods, oppoſed with reſolution and ſucceſs the ambition of the Roman pontiff, artfully connected his own cauſe with that of the eaſtern biſhops, and, like Hannibal, ſought out new allies in the heart of Aſia [125]. If this Punic war was carried on without any effuſion of blood, it was owing much leſs to the moderation than to the weakneſs of the contending prelates. Invectives and excommunications were *their* only weapons; and theſe, during the progreſs of the whole controverſy, they hurled againſt each other with equal fury and devotion. The hard neceſſity of cenſuring either a pope, or a ſaint and martyr, diſtreſſes the modern catholics, whenever they are obliged to relate the particulars of a diſpute, in which the champions of religion indulged ſuch paſſions as ſeem much more adapted to the ſenate or to the camp [126].

Laity and clergy.

The progreſs of the eccleſiaſtical authority gave birth to the memorable diſtinction of the laity and of the clergy, which had been unknown to the Greeks and Romans [127]. The former of theſe appellations comprehended the body of the Chriſtian people; the

[124] Irenæus adv. Hæreſes, iii. 3. Tertullian de Præſcription. c. 36, and Cyprian Epiſtol. 27. 55. 71. 75. Le Clerc (Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 764.) and Moſheim (p. 258. 578.) labour in the interpretation of theſe paſſages. But the looſe and rhetorical ſtyle of the fathers often appears favourable to the pretenſions of Rome.

[125] See the ſharp epiſtle from Firmilianus biſhop of Cæſarea, to Stephen biſhop of Rome, ap. Cyprian. Epiſtol. 75.

[126] Concerning this diſpute of the re-baptiſm of heretics; ſee the epiſtles of Cyprian, and the ſeventh book of Euſebius.

[127] For the origin of theſe words, ſee Moſheim, p. 141. Spanheim, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. p. 633. The diſtinction of *Clerus* and *Laicus* was eſtabliſhed before the time of Tertullian.

latter,

latter, according to the ſignification of the word, was appropriated to the choſen portion that had been ſet apart for the ſervice of religion; a celebrated order of men which has furniſhed the moſt important, though not always the moſt edifying, ſubjects for modern hiſtory. Their mutual hoſtilities ſometimes diſturbed the peace of the infant church, but their zeal and activity were united in the common cauſe, and the love of power, which (under the moſt artful diſguiſes) could inſinuate itſelf into the breaſts of biſhops and martyrs, animated them to increaſe the number of their ſubjects, and to enlarge the limits of the Chriſtian empire. They were deſtitute of any temporal force, and they were for a long time diſcouraged and oppreſſed, rather than aſſiſted, by the civil magiſtrate; but they had acquired, and they employed within their own ſociety, the two moſt efficacious inſtruments of government, rewards and puniſhments; the former derived from the pious liberality, the latter from the devout apprehenſions, of the faithful.

Oblations and revenue of the church.

I. The community of goods, which had ſo agreeably amuſed the imagination of Plato[128], and which ſubſiſted in ſome degree among the auſtere ſect of the Eſſenians[129], was adopted for a ſhort time in the primitive church. The fervour of the firſt proſelytes prompted them to ſell thoſe worldly poſſeſſions, which they deſpiſed, to lay the price of them at the feet of the apoſtles, and to content themſelves with receiving an equal ſhare out of the general diſtribution[130]. The progreſs of the Chriſtian religion relaxed, and gradually aboliſhed this generous inſtitution, which, in hands leſs pure than thoſe of the apoſtles, would too ſoon have been corrupted and abuſed by the returning ſelfiſhneſs of human nature; and the converts who

[128] The community inſtituted by Plato, is more perfect than that which Sir Thomas More had imagined for his Utopia. The community of women, and that of temporal goods, may be conſidered as inſeparable parts of the ſame ſyſtem.

[129] Joſeph. Antiquitat. xviii. 2. Philo, de Vit. Contemplativ.

[130] See the Acts of the Apoſtles, c. 2. 4, 5. with Grotius's Commentary. Moſheim, in a particular diſſertation, attacks the common opinion with very inconcluſive arguments.

embraced

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embraced the new religion were permitted to retain the poſſeſſion of their patrimony, to receive legacies and inheritances, and to increaſe their ſeparate property by all the lawful means of trade and induſtry. Inſtead of an abſolute ſacrifice, a moderate proportion was accepted by the miniſters of the goſpel; and in their weekly or monthly aſſemblies, every believer, according to the exigency of the occaſion, and the meaſure of his wealth and piety, preſented his voluntary offering for the uſe of the common fund [131]. Nothing, however inconſiderable, was refuſed; but it was diligently inculcated, that, in the article of Tythes, the Moſaic law was ſtill of divine obligation; and that ſince the Jews, under a leſs perfect diſcipline, had been commanded to pay a tenth part of all that they poſſeſſed, it would become the diſciples of Chriſt to diſtinguiſh themſelves by a ſuperior degree of liberality [132], and to acquire ſome merit by reſigning a ſuperfluous treaſure, which muſt ſo ſoon be annihilated with the world itſelf [133]. It is almoſt unneceſſary to obſerve, that the revenue of each particular church, which was of ſo uncertain and fluctuating a nature, muſt have varied with the poverty or the opulence of the faithful, as they were diſperſed in obſcure villages, or collected in the great cities of the empire. In the time of the emperor Decius, it was the opinion of the magiſtrates, that the Chriſtians of Rome were poſſeſſed of very conſiderable wealth; that veſſels of gold and ſilver were uſed in their religious worſhip, and that many among their proſelytes had ſold their lands and houſes to increaſe

[131] Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. Major, c. 89. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 39.

[132] Irenæus ad Hæreſ. l. iv. c. 27. 34. Origen in Num. Hom. ii. Cyprian de Unitat. Eccleſ. Conſtitut. Apoſtol. l. ii. c. 34, 35. with the notes of Cotelerius. The conſtitutions introduce this divine precept, by declaring that prieſts are as much above kings, as the ſoul is above the body. Among the tythable articles, they enumerate corn, wine, oil, and wool. On this intereſting ſubject, conſult Prideaux's Hiſtory of Tythes, and Fra-Paolo delle Materie Beneficiarie; two writers of a very different character.

[133] The ſame opinion which prevailed about the year one thouſand, was productive of the ſame effects. Moſt of the Donations expreſs their motive, "appropinquante mundi fine." See Moſheim's General Hiſtory of the Church, vol. i. p. 457.

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the public riches of the ſect, at the expence, indeed, of their unfortunate children, who found themſelves beggars, becauſe their parents had been ſaints[134]. We ſhould liſten with diſtruſt to the ſuſpicions of ſtrangers and enemies: on this occaſion, however, they receive a very ſpecious and probable colour from the two following circumſtances, the only ones that have reached our knowledge, which define any preciſe ſums, or convey any diſtinct idea. Almoſt at the ſame period, the biſhop of Carthage, from a ſociety leſs opulent than that of Rome, collected an hundred thouſand ſeſterces (above eight hundred and fifty pounds ſterling) on a ſudden call of charity to redeem the brethren of Numidia, who had been carried away captives by the barbarians of the deſert[135]. About an hundred years before the reign of Decius, the Roman church had received, in a ſingle donation, the ſum of two hundred thouſand ſeſterces from a ſtranger of Pontus, who propoſed to fix his reſidence in the capital[136]. Theſe oblations, for the moſt part, were made in money; nor was the ſociety of Chriſtians either deſirous or capable of acquiring, to any conſiderable degree, the incumbrance of landed property. It had been provided by ſeveral laws, which were enacted with the ſame deſign as our ſtatutes of mortmain, that no real eſtates ſhould be given or bequeathed to any corporate body, without either a ſpecial privilege or a particular diſpenſation from the emperor or from the ſenate[137]; who were ſeldom

[134] Tum ſumma cura eſt fratribus
(Ut ſermo teſtatur loquax.)
Offerre, fundis venditis
Seſtertiorum millia.
Addicta avorum prædia
Fœdis ſub auctionibus,
Succeſſor exheres gemit
Sanctis egens Parentibus.
Hæc occuluntur abditis
Eccleſiarum in Angulis:
Et ſumma pietas creditur
Nudare dulces liberos.
Prudent. περι στεφανων. Hymn. 2.
The ſubſequent conduct of the deacon Laurence, only proves how proper a uſe was made of the wealth of the Roman church; it was undoubtedly very conſiderable; but Fra-Paolo (c. 3.) appears to exaggerate, when he ſuppoſes, that the ſucceſſors of Commodus were urged to perſecute the Chriſtians by their own avarice, or that of their Prætorian præfects.

[135] Cyprian. Epiſtol. 62.

[136] Tertullian de Preſcriptione, c. 30.

[137] Diocletian gave a reſcript, which is only a declaration of the old law; "Collegium, ſi nullo ſpeciali privilegio ſubnixum ſit,

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ſeldom diſpoſed to grant them in favour of a ſect, at firſt the object of their contempt, and at laſt of their fears and jealouſy. A tranſaction however is related under the reign of Alexander Severus, which diſcovers that the reſtraint was ſometimes eluded or ſuſpended, and that the Chriſtians were permitted to claim and to poſſeſs lands within the limits of Rome itſelf[138]. The progreſs of Chriſtianity, and the civil confuſion of the empire, contributed to relax the ſeverity of the laws, and before the cloſe of the third century many conſiderable eſtates were beſtowed on the opulent churches of Rome, Milan, Carthage, Antioch, Alexandria, and the other great cities of Italy and the provinces.

Diſtribution of the revenue.

The biſhop was the natural ſteward of the church; the public ſtock was intruſted to his care without account or controul; the preſbyters were confined to their ſpiritual functions, and the more dependent order of deacons was ſolely employed in the management and diſtribution of the eccleſiaſtical revenue[139]. If we may give credit to the vehement declamations of Cyprian, there were too many among his African brethren, who, in the execution of their charge, violated every precept, not only of evangelic perfection, but even of moral virtue. By ſome of theſe unfaithful ſtewards the riches of the church were laviſhed in ſenſual pleaſures, by others they were perverted to the purpoſes of private gain, of fraudulent purchaſes, and of rapacious uſury[140]. But as long as the contributions of the Chriſtian people were free and unconſtrained, the abuſe of their confidence could not be very frequent, and the general uſes to which their liberality was applied, reflected honour on the religious ſociety. A decent portion was reſerved for the

fit, hæreditatem capere non poſſe, dubium non eſt." Fra-Paolo (c. 4.) thinks that theſe regulations had been much neglected ſince the reign of Valerian.

[138] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 131. The ground had been public; and was now diſputed between the ſociety of Chriſtians, and that of butchers.

[139] Conſtitut. Apoſtol. ii. 35.

[140] Cyprian de Lapſis, p. 89. Epiſtol. 65. The charge is confirmed by the 19th and 20th canon of the council of Illiberis.

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maintenance of the biſhop and his clergy; a ſufficient ſum was allotted for the expences of the public worſhip, of which the feaſts of love, the *agapæ*, as they were called, conſtituted a very pleaſing part. The whole remainder was the ſacred patrimony of the poor. According to the diſcretion of the biſhop, it was diſtributed to ſupport widows and orphans, the lame, the ſick, and the aged of the community; to comfort ſtrangers and pilgrims, and to alleviate the misfortunes of priſoners and captives, more eſpecially when their ſufferings had been occaſioned by their firm attachment to the cauſe of religion[141]. A generous intercourſe of charity united the moſt diſtant provinces, and the ſmaller congregations were cheerfully aſſiſted by the alms of their more opulent brethren[142]. Such an inſtitution, which paid leſs regard to the merit than to the diſtreſs of the object, very materially conduced to the progreſs of Chriſtianity. The Pagans, who were actuated by a ſenſe of humanity, while they derided the doctrines, acknowledged the benevolence of the new ſect[143]. The proſpect of immediate relief and of future protection allured into its hoſpitable boſom many of thoſe unhappy perſons whom the neglect of the world would have abandoned to the miſeries of want, of ſickneſs, and of old age. There is ſome reaſon likewiſe to believe, that great numbers of infants, who, according to the inhuman practice of the times, had been expoſed by their parents, were frequently reſcued from death, baptiſed, educated, and maintained by the piety of the Chriſtians, and at the expence of the public treaſure[144].

[141] See the apologies of Juſtin, Tertullian, &c.

[142] The wealth and liberality of the Romans to their moſt diſtant brethren, is gratefully celebrated by Dionyſius of Corinth, ap. Euſeb. l. iv. c. 23.

[143] See Lucian in Peregrin. Julian (Epiſt. 49.) ſeems mortified, that the Chriſtian charity maintains not only their own, but likewiſe the heathen poor.

[144] Such, at leaſt, has been the laudable conduct of more modern miſſionaries, under the ſame circumſtances. Above three thouſand new-born infants are annually expoſed in the ſtreets of Pekin. See Le Comte Memoires ſur la Chine, and the Recherches ſur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. i. p. 61.

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Excommunication.

II. It is the undoubted right of every ſociety to exclude from its communion and benefits, ſuch among its members as reject or violate thoſe regulations which have been eſtabliſhed by general conſent. In the exerciſe of this power, the cenſures of the Chriſtian church were chiefly directed againſt ſcandalous ſinners, and particularly thoſe who were guilty of murder, of fraud, or of incontinence; againſt the authors, or the followers of any heretical opinions which had been condemned by the judgment of the epiſcopal order; and againſt thoſe unhappy perſons, who, whether from choice or from compulſion, had polluted themſelves after their baptiſm by any act of idolatrous worſhip. The conſequences of excommunication were of a temporal as well as a ſpiritual nature. The Chriſtian againſt whom it was pronounced, was deprived of any part in the oblations of the faithful. The ties both of religious and of private friendſhip were diſſolved: he found himſelf a profane object of abhorrence to the perſons whom he the moſt eſteemed, or by whom he had been the moſt tenderly beloved; and as far as an expulſion from a reſpectable ſociety could imprint on his character a mark of diſgrace, he was ſhunned or ſuſpected by the generality of mankind. The ſituation of theſe unfortunate exiles was in itſelf very painful and melancholy; but, as it uſually happens, their apprehenſions far exceeded their ſufferings. The benefits of the Chriſtian communion were thoſe of eternal life, nor could they eraſe from their minds the awful opinion, that to thoſe eccleſiaſtical governors by whom they were condemned, the Deity had committed the keys of Hell and of Paradiſe. The heretics, indeed, who might be ſupported by the conſciouſneſs of their intentions, and by the flattering hope that they alone had diſcovered the true path of ſalvation, endeavoured to regain, in their ſeparate aſſemblies, thoſe comforts, temporal as well as ſpiritual, which they no longer derived from the great ſociety of Chriſtians. But

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almoſt all thoſe who had reluctantly yielded to the power of vice or idolatry, were ſenſible of their fallen condition, and anxiouſly deſirous of being reſtored to the benefits of the Chriſtian communion.

With regard to the treatment of theſe penitents two oppoſite opinions, the one of juſtice, the other of mercy, divided the primitive church. The more rigid and inflexible caſuiſts refuſed them for ever, and without exception, the meaneſt place in the holy community, which they had diſgraced or deſerted, and leaving them to the remorſe of a guilty conſcience, indulged them only with a faint ray of hope, that the contrition of their life and death might poſſibly be accepted by the Supreme Being[145]. A milder ſentiment was embraced in practice as well as in theory, by the pureſt and moſt reſpectable of the Chriſtian churches[146]. The gates of reconciliation and of Heaven were ſeldom ſhut againſt the returning penitent; but a ſevere and ſolemn form of diſcipline was inſtituted, which, while it ſerved to expiate his crime, might powerfully deter the ſpectators from the imitation of his example. Humbled by a public confeſſion, emaciated by faſting, and clothed in ſackcloth, the penitent lay proſtrate at the door of the aſſembly, imploring with tears the pardon of his offences, and ſoliciting the prayers of the faithful[147]. If the fault was of a very heinous nature, whole years of penance were eſteemed an inadequate ſatisfaction to the Divine Juſtice; and it was always by ſlow and painful gradations that the ſinner, the heretic, or the apoſtate, was re-admitted into the boſom of the church. A ſentence of perpetual excommunication was, however, reſerved for ſome crimes of an

Public penance.

[145] The Montaniſts and the Novatians, who adhered to this opinion with the greateſt rigour and obſtinacy, found *themſelves* at laſt in the number of excommunicated heretics. See the learned and copious Moſheim, Secul. ii. and iii.

[146] Dionyſius ap. Euſeb. iv. 23. Cyprian, de Lapſis.

[147] Cave's Primitive Chriſtianity, part iii. c. 5. The admirers of antiquity regret the loſs of this public penance.

extraordinary

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extraordinary magnitude, and particularly for the inexcuſable relapſes of thoſe penitents who had already experienced and abuſed the clemency of their eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors. According to the circumſtances or the number of the guilty, the exerciſe of the Chriſtian diſcipline was varied by the diſcretion of the biſhops. The councils of Ancyra and Illiberis were held about the ſame time, the one in Galatia, the other in Spain; but their reſpective canons, which are ſtill extant, ſeem to breathe a very different ſpirit. The Galatian, who after his baptiſm had repeatedly ſacrificed to idols, might obtain his pardon by a penance of ſeven years, and if he had ſeduced others to imitate his example, only three years more were added to the term of his exile. But the unhappy Spaniard, who had committed the ſame offence, was deprived of the hope of reconciliation, even in the article of death; and his idolatry was placed at the head of a liſt of ſeventeen other crimes, againſt which a ſentence no leſs terrible was pronounced. Among theſe we may diſtinguiſh the inexpiable guilt of calumniating a biſhop, a preſbyter, or even a deacon[148].

The dignity of epiſcopal government.

The well-tempered mixture of liberality and rigour, the judicious diſpenſation of rewards and puniſhments, according to the maxims of policy as well as juſtice, conſtituted the *human* ſtrength of the church. The biſhops, whoſe paternal care extended itſelf to the government of both worlds, were ſenſible of the importance of theſe prerogatives, and covering their ambition with the fair pretence of the love of order, they were jealous of any rival in the exerciſe of a diſcipline ſo neceſſary to prevent the deſertion of thoſe troops which had inliſted themſelves under the banner of the

[148] See in Dupin, Bibliothèque Eccleſiaſtique, tom. ii. p. 304—313, a ſhort but rational expoſition of the canons of thoſe councils, which were aſſembled in the firſt moments of tranquillity, after the perſecution of Diocletian. This perſecution had been much leſs ſeverely felt in Spain than in Galatia; a difference which may, in ſome meaſure, account for the contraſt of their regulations.

croſs,

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croſs, and whoſe numbers every day became more conſiderable. From the imperious declamations of Cyprian, we ſhould naturally conclude, that the doctrines of excommunication and penance formed the moſt eſſential part of religion; and that it was much leſs dangerous for the diſciples of Chriſt to neglect the obſervance of the moral duties, than to deſpiſe the cenſures and authority of their biſhops. Sometimes we might imagine that we were liſtening to the voice of Moſes, when he commanded the earth to open, and to ſwallow up, in conſuming flames, the rebellious race which refuſed obedience to the prieſthood of Aaron; and we ſhould ſometimes ſuppoſe that we heard a Roman conſul aſſerting the majeſty of the republic, and declaring his inflexible reſolution to enforce the rigour of the laws. "If ſuch irregularities are ſuffered with "impunity (it is thus that the biſhop of Carthage chides the "lenity of his colleague), if ſuch irregularities are ſuffered, there "is an end of EPISCOPAL VIGOUR[149]; an end of the ſublime and "divine power of governing the church, an end of Chriſtianity "itſelf." Cyprian had renounced thoſe temporal honours, which it is probable he would never have obtained; but the acquiſition of ſuch abſolute command over the conſciences and underſtanding of a congregation, however obſcure or deſpiſed by the world, is more truly grateful to the pride of the human heart, than the poſſeſſion of the moſt deſpotic power, impoſed by arms and conqueſt on a reluctant people.

Recapitulation of the five cauſes.

In the courſe of this important, though perhaps tedious, inquiry, I have attempted to diſplay the ſecondary cauſes which ſo efficaciouſly aſſiſted the truth of the Chriſtian religion. If among theſe cauſes we have diſcovered any artificial ornaments, any accidental circumſtances, or any mixture of error and paſſion, it cannot appear ſurpriſing that mankind ſhould be the moſt ſenſibly affected by

[149] Cyprian. Epiſt. 69.

ſuch

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ſuch motives as were ſuited to their imperfect nature. It was by the aid of theſe cauſes, excluſive zeal, the immediate expectation of another world, the claim of miracles, the practice of rigid virtue, and the conſtitution of the primitive church, that Chriſtianity ſpread itſelf with ſo much ſucceſs in the Roman empire. To the firſt of theſe the Chriſtians were indebted for their invincible valour, which diſdained to capitulate with the enemy whom they were reſolved to vanquiſh. The three ſucceeding cauſes ſupplied their valour with the moſt formidable arms. The laſt of theſe cauſes united their courage, directed their arms, and gave their efforts that irreſiſtible weight, which even a ſmall band of well-trained and intrepid volunteers has ſo often poſſeſſed over an undiſciplined multitude, ignorant of the ſubject, and careleſs of the event of the war. In the various religions of Polytheiſm, ſome wandering fanatics of Egypt and Syria, who addreſſed themſelves to the credulous ſuperſtition of the populace, were perhaps the only order of prieſts[150] that derived their whole ſupport and credit from their ſacerdotal profeſſion, and were very deeply affected by a perſonal concern for the ſafety or proſperity of their tutelar deities. The miniſters of polytheiſm, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the moſt part, men of a noble birth, and of an affluent fortune, who received, as an honourable diſtinction, the care of a celebrated temple, or of a public ſacrifice, exhibited, very frequently at their own expence, the ſacred games[151], and with cold indifference performed the ancient rites, according to the laws and faſhion of their country. As they were engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, their zeal and de-

Weakneſs of polytheiſm.

[150] The arts, the manners, and the vices of the prieſts of the Syrian goddeſs, are very humouroufly deſcribed by Apuleius, in the eighth book of his Metamorphoſes.

[151] The office of Aſiarch was of this nature, and it is frequently mentioned in Ariſtides, the Inſcriptions, &c. It was annual and elective. None but the vaineſt citizens could deſire the honour; none but the moſt wealthy could ſupport the expence. See in the Patres Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 200. with how much indifference Philip the Aſiarch conducted himſelf in the martyrdom of Polycarp. There were likewiſe Bithyniarchs, Lyciarchs, &c.

votion

votion were ſeldom animated by a ſenſe of intereſt, or by the habits of an eccleſiaſtical character. Confined to their reſpective temples and cities, they remained without any connexion of diſcipline or government; and whilſt they acknowledged the ſupreme juriſdiction of the ſenate, of the college of pontiffs, and of the emperor, thoſe civil magiſtrates contented themſelves with the eaſy taſk of maintaining, in peace and dignity, the general worſhip of mankind. We have already ſeen how various, how looſe, and how uncertain were the religious ſentiments of Polytheiſts. They were abandoned, almoſt without controul, to the natural workings of a ſuperſtitious fancy. The accidental circumſtances of their life and ſituation determined the object as well as the degree of their devotion; and as long as their adoration was ſucceſſively proſtituted to a thouſand deities, it was ſcarcely poſſible that their hearts could be ſuſceptible of a very ſincere or lively paſſion for any of them.

The ſcepticiſm of the Pagan world proved favourable to the new religion,

When Chriſtianity appeared in the world, even theſe faint and imperfect impreſſions had loſt much of their original power. Human reaſon, which by its unaſſiſted ſtrength is incapable of perceiving the myſteries of faith, had already obtained an eaſy triumph over the folly of Paganiſm; and when Tertullian or Lactantius employ their labours in expoſing its falſehood and extravagance, they are obliged to tranſcribe the eloquence of Cicero or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of theſe ſceptical writings had been diffuſed far beyond the number of their readers. The faſhion of incredulity was communicated from the philoſopher to the man of pleaſure or buſineſs, from the noble to the plebeian, and from the maſter to the menial ſlave who waited at his table, and who eagerly liſtened to the freedom of his converſation. On public occaſions the philoſophic part of mankind affected to treat with reſpect and decency the religious inſtitutions of their country; but their ſecret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward diſguiſe, and even the people, when they diſcovered that their deities were rejected

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and derided by thoſe whoſe rank or underſtanding they were accuſtomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehenſions concerning the truth of thoſe doctrines, to which they had yielded the moſt implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice expoſed a very numerous portion of human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortleſs ſituation. A ſtate of ſcepticiſm and ſuſpenſe may amuſe a few inquiſitive minds. But the practice of ſuperſtition is ſo congenial to the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they ſtill regret the loſs of their pleaſing viſion. Their love of the marvellous and ſupernatural, their curioſity with regard to future events, and their ſtrong propenſity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the viſible world, were the principal cauſes which favoured the eſtabliſhment of Polytheiſm. So urgent on the vulgar is the neceſſity of believing, that the fall of any ſyſtem of mythology will moſt probably be ſucceeded by the introduction of ſome other mode of ſuperſtition. Some deities of a more recent and faſhionable caſt might ſoon have occupied the deſerted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the deciſive moment, the wiſdom of Providence had not interpoſed a genuine revelation, fitted to inſpire the moſt rational eſteem and conviction, whilſt, at the ſame time, it was adorned with all that could attract the curioſity, the wonder, and the veneration of the people. In their actual diſpoſition, as many were almoſt diſengaged from their artificial prejudices, but equally ſuſceptible and deſirous of a devout attachment; an object much leſs deſerving would have been ſufficient to fill the vacant place in their hearts, and to gratify the uncertain eagerneſs of their paſſions. Thoſe who are inclined to purſue this reflection, inſtead of viewing with aſtoniſhment the rapid progreſs of Chriſtianity, will perhaps be ſurpriſed that its ſucceſs was not ſtill more rapid and ſtill more univerſal.

as well as the peace and union of the Roman empire.

It has been obſerved, with truth as well as propriety, that the conqueſts of Rome prepared and facilitated thoſe of Chriſtianity. In

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In the ſecond chapter of this work we have attempted to explain in what manner the moſt civilized provinces of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were united under the dominion of one ſovereign, and gradually connected by the moſt intimate ties of laws, of manners, and of language. The Jews of Paleſtine, who had fondly expected a temporal deliverer, gave ſo cold a reception to the miracles of the divine prophet, that it was found unneceſſary to publiſh, or at leaſt to preſerve, any Hebrew goſpel[152]. The authentic hiſtories of the actions of Chriſt were compoſed in the Greek language, at a conſiderable diſtance from Jeruſalem, and after the Gentile converts were grown extremely numerous[153]. As ſoon as thoſe hiſtories were tranſlated into the Latin tongue, they were perfectly intelligible to all the ſubjects of Rome, excepting only to the peaſants of Syria and Egypt, for whoſe benefit particular verſions were afterwards made. The public highways, which had been conſtructed for the uſe of the legions, opened an eaſy paſſage for the Chriſtian miſſionaries from Damaſcus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain or Britain; nor did thoſe ſpiritual conquerors encounter any of the obſtacles which uſually retard or prevent the introduction of a foreign religion into a diſtant country. There is the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe, that before the reigns of Diocletian and Conſtantine, the faith of Chriſt had been preached in every province, and in all the great cities of the empire; but the foundation of the ſeveral congregations, the numbers of the faithful who compoſed them, and their proportion to the unbelieving multitude, are now buried in obſcurity, or diſ-

Hiſtorical view of the progreſs of Chriſtianity

[152] The modern critics are not diſpoſed to believe what the fathers almoſt unanimouſly aſſert, that St. Matthew compoſed a Hebrew goſpel, of which only the Greek tranſlation is extant. It ſeems, however, dangerous to reject their teſtimony.

[153] Under the reigns of Nero and Domitian, and in the cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Epheſus. See Mill. Prolegomena ad Nov. Teſtament. and Dr. Lardner's fair and extenſive collection, vol. xv.

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guiſed by fiction and declamation. Such imperfect circumſtances, however, as have reached our knowledge concerning the increaſe of the Chriſtian name in Aſia and Greece, in Egypt, in Italy, and in the Weſt, we ſhall now proceed to relate, without neglecting the real or imaginary acquiſitions which lay beyond the frontiers of the Roman empire.

in the Eaſt.

The rich provinces that extend from the Euphrates to the Ionian ſea, were the principal theatre on which the apoſtle of the Gentiles diſplayed his zeal and piety. The ſeeds of the goſpel, which he had ſcattered in a fertile ſoil, were diligently cultivated by his diſciples; and it ſhould ſeem that, during the two firſt centuries, the moſt conſiderable body of Chriſtians was contained within thoſe limits. Among the ſocieties which were inſtituted in Syria, none were more ancient or more illuſtrious than thoſe of Damaſcus, of Berea or Aleppo, and of Antioch. The prophetic introduction of the Apocalypſe has deſcribed and immortaliſed the ſeven churches of Aſia; Epheſus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira[154], Sardes, Laodicea, and Philadelphia; and their colonies were ſoon diffuſed over that populous country. In a very early period, the iſlands of Cyprus and Crete, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, gave a favourable reception to the new religion; and Chriſtian republics were ſoon founded in the cities of Corinth, of Sparta, and of Athens[155]. The antiquity of the Greek and Aſiatic churches allowed a ſufficient ſpace of time for their increaſe and multiplication, and even the ſwarms of Gnoſtics and other heretics ſerve to diſplay the flouriſhing condition of the orthodox church, ſince the appellation of heretics has always been applied to the leſs numerous

[154] The Alogians (Epiphanius de Hæreſ. 51.) diſputed the genuineneſs of the Apocalypſe, becauſe the church of Thyatira was not yet founded. Epiphanius, who allows the fact, extricates himſelf from the difficulty, by ingeniouſly ſuppoſing, that St. John wrote in the ſpirit of prophecy. See Abauzit Diſcours ſur l'Apocalypſe.

[155] The epiſtles of Ignatius and Dionyſius (ap. Euſeb. iv. 23.) point out many churches in Aſia and Greece. That of Athens ſeems to have been one of the leaſt flouriſhing.

party.

party. To theſe domeſtic teſtimonies we may add the confeſſion, the complaints, and the apprehenſions of the Gentiles themſelves. From the writings of Lucian, a philoſopher who had ſtudied mankind, and who deſcribes their manners in the moſt lively colours, we may learn, that, under the reign of Commodus, his native country of Pontus was filled with Epicureans and *Chriſtians*[156]. Within fourſcore years after the death of Chriſt[157], the humane Pliny laments the magnitude of the evil which he vainly attempted to eradicate. In his very curious epiſtle to the emperor Trajan, he affirms, that the temples were almoſt deſerted, that the ſacred victims ſcarcely found any purchaſers, and that the ſuperſtition had not only infected the cities, but had even ſpread itſelf into the villages and the open country of Pontus and Bithynia[158].

The church of Antioch.

Without deſcending into a minute ſcrutiny of the expreſſions, or of the motives of thoſe writers who either celebrate or lament the progreſs of Chriſtianity in the Eaſt, it may in general be obſerved, that none of them have left us any grounds from whence a juſt eſtimate might be formed of the real numbers of the faithful in thoſe provinces. One circumſtance, however, has been fortunately preſerved, which ſeems to caſt a more diſtinct light on this obſcure but intereſting ſubject. Under the reign of Theodoſius, after Chriſtianity had enjoyed, during more than ſixty years, the ſunſhine of Imperial favour, the ancient and illuſtrious church of Antioch conſiſted of one hundred thouſand perſons, three thouſand of whom were ſupported out of the public oblations[159]. The ſplendour and

[156] Lucian in Alexandro, c. 25. Chriſtianity however muſt have been very unequally diffuſed over Pontus; ſince in the middle of the third century there were no more than ſeventeen believers in the extenſive dioceſe of Neo-Cæſarea. See M. de Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſt. tom. iv. p. 675. from Baſil and Gregory of Nyſſa, who were themſelves natives of Cappadocia.

[157] According to the ancients, Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered under the conſulſhip of the two Gemini, in the year 29 of our preſent æra. Pliny was ſent into Bithynia (according to Pagi) in the year 110.

[158] Plin. Epiſt. x. 97.

[159] Chryſoſtom. Opera, tom. vii. p. 638. 840.

dignity

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dignity of the queen of the East, the acknowledged populouſneſs of Cæſarea, Seleucia, and Alexandria, and the deſtruction of two hundred and fifty thouſand ſouls in the earthquake which afflicted Antioch under the elder Juſtin[160], are ſo many convincing proofs that the whole number of its inhabitants was not leſs than half a million, and that the Chriſtians, however multiplied by zeal and power, did not exceed a fifth part of that great city. How different a proportion muſt we adopt when we compare the perſecuted with the triumphant church, the Weſt with the Eaſt, remote villages with populous towns, and countries recently converted to the faith, with the place where the believers firſt received the appellation of Chriſtians! It muſt not, however, be diſſembled, that, in another paſſage, Chryſoſtom, to whom we are indebted for this uſeful information, computes the multitude of the faithful as even ſuperior to that of the Jews and Pagans[161]. But the ſolution of this apparent difficulty is eaſy and obvious. The eloquent preacher draws a parallel between the civil and the eccleſiaſtical conſtitution of Antioch; between the liſt of Chriſtians who had acquired Heaven by baptiſm, and the liſt of citizens who had a right to ſhare the public liberality. Slaves, ſtrangers, and infants were compriſed in the former; they were excluded from the latter.

In Egypt.

The extenſive commerce of Alexandria, and its proximity to Paleſtine, gave an eaſy entrance to the new religion. It was at firſt embraced by great numbers of the Therapeutæ, or Eſſenians of the lake Mareotis, a Jewiſh ſect which had abated much of its reverence for the Moſaic ceremonies. The auſtere life of the Eſſenians, their faſts and excommunications, the community of goods, the love of celibacy, their zeal for martyrdom, and the warmth though not the

[160] John Malela, tom. ii. p. 144. He draws the ſame concluſion with regard to the populouſneſs of Antioch.

[161] Chryſoſtom. tom. i. p. 592. I am indebted for theſe paſſages, though not for my inference, to the learned Dr. Lardner. Credibility of the Goſpel Hiſtory, vol. xii. p. 370.

purity

purity of their faith, already offered a very lively image of the primitive diſcipline[162]. It was in the ſchool of Alexandria that the Chriſtian theology appears to have aſſumed a regular and ſcientifical form; and when Hadrian viſited Egypt, he found a church compoſed of Jews and of Greeks, ſufficiently important to attract the notice of that inquiſitive prince[163]. But the progreſs of Chriſtianity was for a long time confined within the limits of a ſingle city, which was itſelf a foreign colony, and till the cloſe of the ſecond century the predeceſſors of Demetrius were the only prelates of the Egyptian church. Three biſhops were conſecrated by the hands of Demetrius, and the number was increaſed to twenty by his ſucceſſor Heraclas[164]. The body of the natives, a people diſtinguiſhed by a ſullen inflexibility of temper[165], entertained the new doctrine with coldneſs and reluctance: and even in the time of Origen, it was rare to meet with an Egyptian who had ſurmounted his early prejudices in favour of the ſacred animals of his country[166]. As ſoon, indeed, as Chriſtianity aſcended the throne, the zeal of thoſe barbarians obeyed the prevailing impulſion; the cities of Egypt were filled with biſhops, and the deſerts of Thebais ſwarmed with hermits.

In Rome.

A perpetual ſtream of ſtrangers and provincials flowed into the capacious boſom of Rome. Whatever was ſtrange or odious, whoever was guilty or ſuſpected, might hope, in the obſcurity of that immenſe capital, to elude the vigilance of the law. In ſuch a various

[162] Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. 2. c. 20, 21, 22, 23. has examined, with the moſt critical accuracy, the curious treatiſe of Philo, which deſcribes the Therapeutæ. By proving that it was compoſed as early as the time of Auguſtus, Baſnage has demonſtrated, in ſpite of Euſebius (l. ii. c. 17.), and a crowd of modern Catholics, that the Therapeutæ were neither Chriſtians nor monks. It ſtill remains probable that they changed their name, preſerved their manners, adopted ſome new articles of faith, and gradually became the fathers of the Egyptian Aſcetics.

[163] See a letter of Hadrian, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 245.

[164] For the ſucceſſion of Alexandrian biſhops, conſult Renaudot's Hiſtory, p. 24, &c. This curious fact is preſerved by the patriarch Eutychius (Annal. tom. i. p. 334. Verſ. Pocock), and its internal evidence would alone be a ſufficient anſwer to all the objections which Biſhop Pearſon has urged in the Vindiciæ Ignatianæ.

[165] Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.

[166] Origen contra Celſum, l. i. p. 40.

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conflux of nations, every teacher, either of truth or of falſehood, every founder, whether of a virtuous or a criminal aſſociation, might eaſily multiply his diſciples or accomplices. The Chriſtians of Rome, at the time of the accidental perſecution of Nero, are repreſented by Tacitus as already amounting to a very great multitude [167], and the language of that great hiſtorian is almoſt ſimilar to the ſtyle employed by Livy, when he relates the introduction and the ſuppreſſion of the rites of Bacchus. After the Bacchanals had awakened the ſeverity of the ſenate, it was likewiſe apprehended that a very great multitude, as it were *another people*, had been initiated into thoſe abhorred myſteries. A more careful inquiry ſoon demonſtrated, that the offenders did not exceed ſeven thouſand; a number indeed ſufficiently alarming, when conſidered as the object of public juſtice [168]. It is with the ſame candid allowance that we ſhould interpret the vague expreſſions of Tacitus, and in a former inſtance of Pliny, when they exaggerate the crowds of deluded fanatics who had forſaken the eſtabliſhed worſhip of the gods. The church of Rome was undoubtedly the firſt and moſt populous of the empire; and we are poſſeſſed of an authentic record which atteſts the ſtate of religion in that city about the middle of the third century, and after a peace of thirty-eight years. The clergy, at that time, conſiſted of a biſhop, forty-ſix preſbyters, ſeven deacons, as many ſub-deacons, forty-two acolythes, and fifty readers, exorciſts, and porters. The number of widows, of the infirm, and of the poor, who were maintained by the oblations of the faithful, amounted to fifteen hundred [169]. From reaſon, as well as from the analogy of Antioch, we may venture to eſtimate the Chriſtians of

[167] Ingens multitudo is the expreſſion of Tacitus, xv. 44.

[168] T. Liv. xxxix. 13. 15, 16, 17. Nothing could exceed the horror and conſternation of the ſenate on the diſcovery of the Bacchanalians, whoſe depravity is deſcribed, and perhaps exaggerated, by Livy.

[169] Euſebius, l. vi. c. 43. The Latin tranſlator (M. de Valois) has thought proper to reduce the number of preſbyters toforty-four.

Rome

Rome at about fifty thouſand. The populouſneſs of that great capital cannot perhaps be exactly aſcertained; but the moſt modeſt calculation will not ſurely reduce it lower than a million of inhabitants, of whom the Chriſtians might conſtitute at the moſt a twentieth part [170].

In Africa and the weſtern provinces.

The weſtern provincials appeared to have derived the knowledge of Chriſtianity from the ſame ſource which had diffuſed among them the language, the ſentiments, and the manners of Rome. In this more important circumſtance, Africa, as well as Gaul, was gradually faſhioned to the imitation of the capital. Yet notwithſtanding the many favourable occaſions which might invite the Roman miſſionaries to viſit their Latin provinces, it was late before they paſſed either the ſea or the Alps [171]; nor can we diſcover in thoſe great countries any aſſured traces either of faith or of perſecution that aſcend higher than the reign of the Antonines [172]. The ſlow progreſs of the goſpel in the cold climate of Gaul, was extremely different from the eagerneſs with which it ſeems to have been received on the burning ſands of Africa. The African Chriſtians ſoon formed one of the principal members of the primitive church. The practice introduced into that province, of appointing biſhops to the moſt inconſiderable towns, and very frequently to the moſt obſcure villages, contributed to multiply the ſplendour and importance of their religious ſocieties, which during the courſe of

[170] This proportion of the preſbyters and of the poor, to the reſt of the people, was originally fixed by Burnet (Travels into Italy, p. 168), and is approved by Moyle (vol. ii. p. 151.). They were both unacquainted with the paſſage of Chryſoſtom, which converts their conjecture almoſt into a fact.

[171] Serius trans Alpes, religione Dei ſuſceptâ. Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. Theſe were the celebrated martyrs of Lyons. See Euſebius, v. 1. Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. ii. p. 316. According to the Donatiſts, whoſe aſſertion is confirmed by the tacit acknowledgment of Auguſtin, Africa was the laſt of the provinces which received the goſpel. Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. i. p. 754.

[172] Tum primum intra Gallias martyria viſa. Sulp. Severus, l. ii. With regard to Africa, ſee Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3. It is imagined, that the Scyllitan martyrs were the firſt (Acta Sincera Ruinart. p. 34.). One of the adverſaries of Apuleius ſeems to have been a Chriſtian. Apolog. p. 496, 497. Edit. Delphin.

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the third century were animated by the zeal of Tertullian, directed by the abilities of Cyprian, and adorned by the eloquence of Lactantius. But if, on the contrary, we turn our eyes towards Gaul, we muſt content ourſelves with diſcovering, in the time of Marcus Antoninus, the feeble and united congregations of Lyons and Vienna; and even as late as the reign of Decius, we are aſſured, that in a few cities only, Arles, Narbonne, Thouloufe, Limoges, Clermont, Tours, and Paris, ſome ſcattered churches were ſupported by the devotion of a ſmall number of Chriſtians [173]. Silence is indeed very conſiſtent with devotion, but as it is ſeldom compatible with zeal, we may perceive and lament the languid ſtate of Chriſtianity in thoſe provinces which had exchanged the Celtic for the Latin tongue; ſince they did not, during the three firſt centuries, give birth to a ſingle eccleſiaſtical writer. From Gaul, which claimed a juſt pre-eminence of learning and authority over all the countries on this ſide of the Alps, the light of the goſpel was more faintly reflected on the remote provinces of Spain and Britain; and if we may credit the vehement aſſertions of Tertullian, they had already received the firſt rays of the faith, when he addreſſed his apology to the magiſtrates of the emperor Severus [174]. But the obſcure and imperfect origin of the weſtern churches of Europe has been ſo negligently recorded, that if we would relate the time and manner of their foundation, we muſt ſupply the ſilence of antiquity by thoſe legends which avarice or ſuperſtition long afterwards dictated to the monks in the lazy gloom of their convents [175]. Of theſe holy romances, that of the apoſtle

[173] Raræ in aliquibus civitatibus eccleſiæ, pancorum Chriſtianorum devotione, reſurgerent. Acta Sincera, p. 130. Gregory of Tours, l. i. c. 28. Moſheim, p. 207. 449. There is ſome reaſon to believe, that, in the beginning of the fourth century, the extenſive dioceſes of Liege, of Treves, and of Cologne, compoſed a ſingle biſhopric, which had been very recently founded. See Memoires de Tillemont, tom. vi. part i. p. 43. 411.

[174] The date of Tertullian's Apology is fixed, in a diſſertation of Moſheim, to the year 198.

[175] In the fifteenth century, there were few who had either inclination or courage to queſtion

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apoſtle St. James can alone, by its ſingle extravagance, deſerve to be mentioned. From a peaceful fiſherman of the lake of Genneſareth, he was transformed into a valorous knight, who charged at the head of the Spaniſh chivalry in their battles againſt the Moors. The graveſt hiſtorians have celebrated his exploits; the miraculous ſhrine of Compoſtella diſplayed his power; and the ſword of a military order, aſſiſted by the terrors of the Inquiſition, was ſufficient to remove every objection of profane criticiſm [176].

Beyond the limits of the Roman empire.

The progreſs of Chriſtianity was not confined to the Roman empire; and according to the primitive fathers, who interpret facts by prophecy, the new religion, within a century after the death of its divine author, had already viſited every part of the globe. "There exiſts not," ſays Juſtin Martyr, "a people, whether Greek "or Barbarian, of any other race of men, by whatſoever appella- "tion or manners they may be diſtinguiſhed, however ignorant of "arts or agriculture, whether they dwell under tents, or wander "about in covered waggons, among whom prayers are not offered "up in the name of a crucified Jeſus to the Father and Creator of "all things [177]." But this ſplendid exaggeration, which even at preſent it would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the real ſtate of mankind, can be conſidered only as the raſh ſally of a devout but careleſs writer, the meaſure of whoſe belief was regulated by that of his wiſhes. But neither the belief, nor the wiſhes of the fathers, can alter the truth of hiſtory. It will ſtill remain an undoubted fact, that the barbarians of Scythia and Germany, who afterwards ſubverted the Roman monarchy, were involved in the darkneſs

queſtion whether Joſeph of Arimathea founded the monaſtery of Glaſtenbury, and whether Dionyſius the Areopagite preferred the reſidence of Paris to that of Athens.

[176] The ſtupendous metamorphoſis was performed in the ninth century. See Mariana (Hiſt. Hiſpan. l. vii. c. 13. tom. i. p. 285. edit. Hag. Com. 1733.), who, in every ſenſe, imitates Livy, and the honeſt detection of the legend of St. James by Dr. Geddes, Miſcellanies, vol. ii. p. 221.

[177] Juſtin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryphon. p. 341. Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. l. i. c. 10. Tertullian adv. Jud. c. 7. See Moſheim, p. 203.

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of paganiſm; and that even the converſion of Iberia, of Armenia, or of Æthiopia, was not attempted with any degree of ſucceſs till the ſceptre was in the hands of an orthodox emperor [178]. Before that time, the various accidents of war and commerce might indeed diffuſe an imperfect knowledge of the goſpel among the tribes of Caledonia [179], and among the borderers of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates [180]. Beyond the laſt-mentioned river, Edeſſa was diſtinguiſhed by a firm and early adherence to the faith [181]. From Edeſſa, the principles of Chriſtianity were eaſily introduced into the Greek and Syrian cities which obeyed the ſucceſſors of Artaxerxes; but they do not appear to have made any deep impreſſion on the minds of the Perſians, whoſe religious ſyſtem, by the labours of a well-diſciplined order of prieſts, had been conſtructed with much more art and ſolidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome [182].

General proportion of Chriſtians and Pagans.

From this impartial though imperfect ſurvey of the progreſs of Chriſtianity, it may perhaps ſeem probable, that the number of its proſelytes has been exceſſively magnified by fear on the one ſide, and by devotion on the other. According to the irreproachable

[178] See the fourth century of Moſheim's Hiſtory of the Church. Many, though very confuſed circumſtances, that relate to the converſion of Iberia and Armenia, may be found in Moſes of Chorene, l. iii. c. 78—89.

[179] According to Tertullian, the Chriſtian faith had penetrated into parts of Britain inacceſſible to the Roman arms. About a century afterwards, Oſſian, the ſon of Fingal, is *ſaid* to have diſputed, in his extreme old age, with one of the foreign miſſionaries, and the diſpute is ſtill extant, in verſe, and in the Erſe language. See Mr. Macpherſon's Diſſertation on the Antiquity of Oſſian's Poems, p. 10.

[180] The Goths, who ravaged Aſia in the reign of Gallienus, carried away great numbers of captives; ſome of whom were Chriſtians, and became miſſionaries. See Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſt. tom. iv. p. 44.

[181] The Legend of Abgarus, fabulous as it is, affords a deciſive proof, that many years before Euſebius wrote his hiſtory, the greateſt part of the inhabitants of Edeſſa had embraced Chriſtianity. Their rivals, the citizens of Carrhæ, adhered, on the contrary, to the cauſe of Paganiſm, as late as the ſixth century.

[182] According to Bardeſanes (ap. Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel.) there were ſome Chriſtians in Perſia before the end of the ſecond century. In the time of Conſtantine (ſee his Epiſtle to Sapor, Vit. l. iv. c. 13.) they compoſed a flouriſhing church. Conſult Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique du Manicheiſme, tom. i. p. 180. and the Bibliotheca Orientalis of Aſſemani.

teſtimony

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teſtimony of Origen [183], the proportion of the faithful was very inconſiderable when compared with the multitude of an unbelieving world; but, as we are left without any diſtinct information, it is impoſſible to determine, and it is difficult even to conjecture, the real numbers of the primitive Chriſtians. The moſt favourable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome, will not permit us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the ſubjects of the empire had enliſted themſelves under the banner of the croſs before the important converſion of Conſtantine. But their habits of faith, of zeal, and of union, ſeemed to multiply their numbers; and the ſame cauſes which contributed to their future increaſe, ſerved to render their actual ſtrength more apparent and more formidable.

Whether the firſt Chriſtians were mean and ignorant.

Such is the conſtitution of civil ſociety, that whilſt a few perſons are diſtinguiſhed by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obſcurity, ignorance, and poverty. The Chriſtian religion, which addreſſed itſelf to the whole human race, muſt conſequently collect a far greater number of proſelytes from the lower than from the ſuperior ranks of life. This innocent and natural circumſtance has been improved into a very odious imputation, which ſeems to be leſs ſtrenuouſly denied by the apologiſts, than it is urged by the adverſaries, of the faith; that the new ſect of Chriſtians was almoſt entirely compoſed of the dregs of the populace, of peaſants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and ſlaves, the laſt of whom might ſometimes introduce the miſſionaries into the rich and noble families to which they belonged. Theſe obſcure teachers (ſuch was the charge of malice and infidelity) are as mute in public as they are loquacious and dogmatical in private. Whilſt they cautiouſly avoid the dangerous encounter of philoſophers, they mingle with the rude and illiterate crowd, and

[183] Origen contra Celſum, l. viii. p. 424.

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infinuate themſelves into thoſe minds, whom their age, their ſex, or their education, has the beſt diſpoſed to receive the impreſſion of ſuperſtitious terrors[184].

Some exceptions with regard to learning;

This unfavourable picture, though not devoid of a faint reſemblance, betrays, by its dark colouring and diſtorted features, the pencil of an enemy. As the humble faith of Chriſt diffuſed itſelf through the world, it was embraced by ſeveral perſons who derived ſome conſequence from the advantages of nature or fortune. Ariſtides, who preſented an eloquent apology to the emperor Hadrian, was an Athenian philoſopher[185]. Juſtin Martyr had ſought divine knowledge in the ſchools of Zeno, of Ariſtotle, of Pythagoras, and of Plato, before he fortunately was accoſted by the old man, or rather the angel, who turned his attention to the ſtudy of the Jewiſh prophets[186]. Clemens of Alexandria had acquired much various reading in the Greek, and Tertullian in the Latin, language. Julius Africanus and Origen poſſeſſed a very conſiderable ſhare of the learning of their times; and although the ſtyle of Cyprian is very different from that of Lactantius, we might almoſt diſcover that both thoſe writers had been public teachers of rhetoric. Even the ſtudy of philoſophy was at length introduced among the Chriſtians, but it was not always productive of the moſt ſalutary effects; knowledge was as often the parent of hereſy as of devotion, and the deſcription which was deſigned for the followers of Artemon, may, with equal propriety, be applied to the various ſects that reſiſted the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles. "They preſume to alter "the holy ſcriptures, to abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to "form their opinions according to the ſubtile precepts of logic. "The ſcience of the church is neglected for the ſtudy of geometry,

[184] Minucius Fœlix, c. 8. with Wowerus's notes. Celſus ap. Origen, l. iii. p. 138. 142. Julian ap. Cyril. l. vi. p. 206. Edit. Spanheim.

[185] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. iv. 3. Hieronym. Epiſt. 83.

[186] The ſtory is prettily told in Juſtin's Dialogues. Tillemont (Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. ii. p. 334.), who relates it after him, is ſure that the old man was a diſguiſed angel.

"and

"and they loſe ſight of Heaven while they are employed in meaſur-
"ing the earth. Euclid is perpetually in their hands. Ariſtotle
"and Theophraſtus are the objects of their admiration; and they
"expreſs an uncommon reverence for the works of Galen. Their
"errors are derived from the abuſe of the arts and ſciences of the
"infidels, and they corrupt the ſimplicity of the goſpel by the refine-
"ments of human reaſon [187]."

with regard to rank and fortune.

Nor can it be affirmed with truth, that the advantages of birth and fortune were always ſeparated from the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. Several Roman citizens were brought before the tribunal of Pliny, and he ſoon diſcovered, that a great number of perſons of *every order* of men in Bithynia had deſerted the religion of their anceſtors [188]. His unſuſpected teſtimony may, in this inſtance, obtain more credit than the bold challenge of Tertullian, when he addreſſes himſelf to the fears as well as to the humanity of the proconſul of Africa, by aſſuring him, that if he perſiſts in his cruel intentions, he muſt decimate Carthage, and that he will find among the guilty many perſons of his own rank, ſenators and matrons of nobleſt extraction, and the friends or relations of his moſt intimate friends [189]. It appears, however, that about forty years afterwards the emperor Valerian was perſuaded of the truth of this aſſertion, ſince in one of his reſcripts he evidently ſuppoſes, that ſenators, Roman knights, and ladies of quality, were engaged in the Chriſtian ſect [190]. The church ſtill continued to increaſe its outward ſplendour as it loſt its internal purity; and, in the reign of Diocletian, the palace, the courts of juſtice, and even the army, concealed

[187] Euſebius, v. 28. It may be hoped, that none, except the heretics, gave occaſion to the complaint of Celſus (ap. Origen, l. ii. p. 77.), that the Chriſtians were perpetually correcting and altering their Goſpels.

[188] Plin. Epiſt. x. 97. Fuerunt alii ſimis amentiæ, cives Romani ----- Multi enim omnis ætatis, *omnis ordinis*, utriuſque ſexûs, etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur.

[189] Tertullian ad Scapulam. Yet even his rhetoric riſes no higher than to claim a *tenth* part of Carthage.

[190] Cyprian. Epiſt. 79.

a multitude

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a multitude of Chriſtians, who endeavoured to reconcile the intereſts of the preſent, with thoſe of a future, life.

Chriſtianity moſt favourably received by the poor and ſimple.

And yet theſe exceptions are either too few in number, or too recent in time, entirely to remove the imputation of ignorance and obſcurity which has been ſo arrogantly caſt on the firſt proſelytes of Chriſtianity. Inſtead of employing in our defence the fictions of later ages, it will be more prudent to convert the occaſion of ſcandal into a ſubject of edification. Our ſerious thoughts will ſuggeſt to us, that the apoſtles themſelves were choſen by providence among the fiſhermen of Galilee, and that the lower we depreſs the temporal condition of the firſt Chriſtians, the more reaſon we ſhall find to admire their merit and ſucceſs. It is incumbent on us diligently to remember, that the kingdom of Heaven was promiſed to the poor in ſpirit, and that minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind, cheerfully liſten to the divine promiſe of future happineſs; while, on the contrary, the fortunate are ſatisfied with the poſſeſſion of this world; and the wiſe abuſe in doubt and diſpute their vain ſuperiority of reaſon and knowledge.

Rejected by ſome eminent men of the firſt and ſecond centuries.

We ſtand in need of ſuch reflections to comfort us for the loſs of ſome illuſtrious characters, which in our eyes might have ſeemed the moſt worthy of the heavenly preſent. The names of Seneca, of the elder and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the ſlave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flouriſhed, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their reſpective ſtations, either in active or contemplative life; their excellent underſtandings were improved by ſtudy; Philoſophy had purified their minds from the prejudices of the popular ſuperſtition; and their days were ſpent in the purſuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Yet all theſe ſages (it is no leſs an object of ſurpriſe than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. Their language or their ſilence equally diſcover their contempt for the growing ſect, which

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which in their time had diffuſed itſelf over the Roman empire. Thoſe among them who condeſcend to mention the Chriſtians, conſider them only as obſtinate and perverſe enthuſiaſts, who exacted an implicit ſubmiſſion to their myſterious doctrines, without being able to produce a ſingle argument that could engage the attention of men of ſenſe and learning [191].

Their neglect of prophecy

It is at leaſt doubtful whether any of theſe philoſophers peruſed the apologies which the primitive Chriſtians repeatedly publiſhed in behalf of themſelves and of their religion; but it is much to be lamented that ſuch a cauſe was not defended by abler advocates. They expoſe with ſuperfluous wit and eloquence, the extravagance of Polytheiſm. They intereſt our compaſſion by diſplaying the innocence and ſufferings of their injured brethren. But when they would demonſtrate the divine origin of Chriſtianity, they inſiſt much more ſtrongly on the predictions which announced, than on the miracles which accompanied, the appearance of the Meſſiah. Their favourite argument might ſerve to edify a Chriſtian or to convert a Jew, ſince both the one and the other acknowledge the authority of thoſe prophecies, and both are obliged, with devout reverence, to ſearch for their ſenſe and their accompliſhment. But this mode of perſuaſion loſes much of its weight and influence, when it is addreſſed to thoſe who neither underſtand nor reſpect the Moſaic diſpenſation and the prophetic ſtyle [192]. In the unſkilful hands of Juſtin and of the ſucceeding apologiſts, the

[191] Dr. Lardner, in his firſt and ſecond volume of Jewiſh and Chriſtian teſtimonies, collects and illuſtrates thoſe of Pliny the younger, of Tacitus, of Galen, of Marcus Antoninus, and perhaps of Epictetus (for it is doubtful whether that philoſopher means to ſpeak of the Chriſtians). The new ſect is totally unnoticed by Seneca, the elder Pliny, and Plutarch.

[192] If the famous prophecy of the Seventy Weeks had been alleged to a Roman philoſopher, would he not have replied in the words of Cicero, "Quæ tandem iſta auguratio eſt, annorum potius quam aut menſium aut dierum?" De Divinatione, ii. 30. Obſerve with what irreverence Lucian (in Alexandro, c. 13.) and his friend Celſus ap. Origen, (l. vii. p. 327.) expreſs themſelves concerning the Hebrew prophets.

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ſublime meaning of the Hebrew oracles evaporates in diſtant types, affected conceits, and cold allegories; and even their authenticity was rendered ſuſpicious to an unenlightened Gentile, by the mixture of pious forgeries, which, under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, and the Sibyls[193], were obtruded on him as of equal value with the genuine inſpirations of Heaven. The adoption of fraud and ſophiſtry in the defence of revelation, too often reminds us of the injudicious conduct of thoſe poets who load their *invulnerable* heroes with a uſeleſs weight of cumberſome and brittle armour.

and of miracles.

But how ſhall we excuſe the ſupine inattention of the Pagan and philoſophic world, to thoſe evidences which were preſented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reaſon, but to their ſenſes? During the age of Chriſt, of his apoſtles, and of their firſt diſciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind ſaw, the ſick were healed, the dead were raiſed, dæmons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently ſuſpended for the benefit of the church. But the ſages of Greece and Rome turned aſide from the awful ſpectacle, and purſuing the ordinary occupations of life and ſtudy, appeared unconſcious of any alterations in the moral or phyſical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth[194], or at leaſt a celebrated province of the Roman empire[195], was involved in a præternatural darkneſs of three hours. Even this miraculous

General ſilence concerning the darkneſs of the Paſſion.

[193] The Philoſophers, who derided the more ancient predictions of the Sibyls, would eaſily have detected the Jewiſh and Chriſtian forgeries, which have been ſo triumphantly quoted by the fathers from Juſtin Martyr to Lactantius. When the Sibylline verſes had performed their appointed taſk, they, like the ſyſtem of the millennium, were quietly laid aſide. The Chriſtian Sibyl had unluckily fixed the ruin of Rome for the year 195, A. U. C. 948.

[194] The fathers, as they are drawn out in battle array by Dom Calmet (Diſſertations ſur la Bible, tom. iii. p. 295—308.), ſeem to cover the whole earth with darkneſs, in which they are followed by moſt of the moderns.

[195] Origen ad Matth. c. 27. and a few modern critics, Beza, Le Clerc, Lardner, &c. are deſirous of confining it to the land of Judea.

event,

event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curioſity, and the devotion of mankind, paſſed without notice in an age of ſcience and hiſtory[196]. It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who muſt have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earlieſt intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of theſe philoſophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipſes, which his indefatigable curioſity could collect[197]. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greateſt phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witneſs ſince the creation of the globe. A diſtinct chapter of Pliny[198] is deſigned for eclipſes of an extraordinary nature and unuſual duration; but he contents himſelf with deſcribing the ſingular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæſar, when, during the greateſt part of a year, the orb of the ſun appeared pale and without ſplendour. This ſeaſon of obſcurity, which cannot ſurely be compared with the præternatural darkneſs of the Paſſion, had been already celebrated by moſt of the poets[199] and hiſtorians of that memorable age[200].

[196] The celebrated paſſage of Phlegon is now wiſely abandoned. When Tertullian aſſures the Pagans, that the mention of the prodigy is found in Arcanis (not Archivis) veſtris (ſee his Apology, c. 21.), he probably appeals to the Sibylline verſes, which relate it exactly in the words of the Goſpel.

[197] Seneca Quæſt. Natur. i. 1. 15. vi. 1. vii. 17. Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. ii.

[198] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. ii. 30.

[199] Virgil Georgic. i. 466. Tibullus, l. i. Eleg. v. ver. 75. Ovid Metamorph. xv. 782. Lucan. Pharſal. i. 540. The laſt of theſe poets places this prodigy before the civil war.

[200] See a public epiſtle of M. Antony in Joſeph. Antiquit. xiv. 12. Plutarch in Cæſar. p. 471. Appian, Bell. Civil. l. iv. Dion Caſſius, l. xlv. p. 431. Julius Obſequens, c. 128. His little treatiſe is an abſtract of Livy's prodigies.

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The Conduct of the Roman Government towards the Chriſtians, from the Reign of Nero to that of Conſtantine.

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Chriſtianity perſecuted by the Roman emperors.

IF we ſeriouſly conſider the purity of the Chriſtian religion, the ſanctity of its moral precepts, and the innocent as well as auſtere lives of the greater number of thoſe, who during the firſt ages embraced the faith of the goſpel, we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe, that ſo benevolent a doctrine would have been received with due reverence, even by the unbelieving world; that the learned and the polite, however they might deride the miracles, would have eſteemed the virtues of the new ſect; and that the magiſtrates, inſtead of perſecuting, would have protected an order of men who yielded the moſt paſſive obedience to the laws, though they declined the active cares of war and government. If on the other hand we recollect the univerſal toleration of Polytheiſm, as it was invariably maintained by the faith of the people, the incredulity of philoſophers, and the policy of the Roman ſenate and emperors, we are at a loſs to diſcover what new offence the Chriſtians had committed, what new provocation could exaſperate the mild indifference of antiquity, and what new motives could urge the Roman princes, who beheld without concern a thouſand forms of religion ſubſiſting in peace under their gentle ſway, to inflict a ſevere puniſhment on any part of their ſubjects, who had choſen for themſelves a ſingular but an inoffenſive mode of faith and worſhip.

The religious policy of the ancient world ſeems to have aſſumed a more ſtern and intolerant character, to oppoſe the progreſs

greſs of Chriſtianity. About fourſcore years after the death of Chriſt, his innocent diſciples were puniſhed with death by the ſentence of a proconſul of the moſt amiable and philoſophic character, and according to the laws of an emperor, diſtinguiſhed by the wiſdom and juſtice of his general adminiſtration. The apologies which were repeatedly addreſſed to the ſucceſſors of Trajan are filled with the moſt pathetic complaints, that the Chriſtians who obeyed the dictates, and ſolicited the liberty, of conſcience, were alone, among all the ſubjects of the Roman empire, excluded from the common benefits of their auſpicious government. The deaths of a few eminent martyrs have been recorded with care; and from the time that Chriſtianity was inveſted with the ſupreme power, the governors of the church have been no leſs diligently employed in diſplaying the cruelty, than in imitating the conduct, of their Pagan adverſaries. To ſeparate (if it be poſſible) a few authentic as well as intereſting facts from an undigeſted maſs of fiction and error, and to relate, in a clear and rational manner, the cauſes, the extent, the duration, and the moſt important circumſtances of the perſecutions to which the firſt Chriſtians were expoſed, is the deſign of the preſent Chapter.

Inquiry into their motives.

The ſectaries of a perſecuted religion, depreſſed by fear, animated with reſentment, and perhaps heated by enthuſiaſm, are ſeldom in a proper temper of mind calmly to inveſtigate, or candidly to appreciate, the motives of their enemies, which often eſcape the impartial and diſcerning view even of thoſe who are placed at a ſecure diſtance from the flames of perſecution. A reaſon has been aſſigned for the conduct of the emperors towards the primitive Chriſtians, which may appear the more ſpecious and probable as it is drawn from the acknowledged genius of Polytheiſm. It has already been obſerved, that the religious concord of the world was principally ſupported by the implicit aſſent and reverence which the nations of antiquity expreſſed for their reſpective traditions and ceremonies.

It

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It might therefore be expected, that they would unite with indignation againſt any ſect or people which ſhould ſeparate itſelf from the communion of mankind, and claiming the excluſive poſſeſſion of divine knowledge, ſhould diſdain every form of worſhip, except its own, as impious and idolatrous. The rights of toleration were held by mutual indulgence: they were juſtly forfeited by a refuſal of the accuſtomed tribute. As the payment of this tribute was inflexibly refuſed by the Jews, and by them alone, the conſideration of the treatment which they experienced from the Roman magiſtrates, will ſerve to explain how far theſe ſpeculations are juſtified by facts, and will lead us to diſcover the true cauſes of the perſecution of Chriſtianity.

Rebellious ſpirit of the Jews.

Without repeating what has been already mentioned, of the reverence of the Roman princes and governors for the temple of Jeruſalem, we ſhall only obſerve, that the deſtruction of the temple and city was accompanied and followed by every circumſtance that could exaſperate the minds of the conquerors, and authorize religious perſecution by the moſt ſpecious arguments of political juſtice and the public ſafety. From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius, the Jews diſcovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the moſt furious maſſacres and inſurrections. Humanity is ſhocked at the recital of the horrid cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt, of Cyprus, and of Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous friendſhip with the unſuſpecting natives[1]; and we are tempted to applaud the ſevere retaliation which was exerciſed by the arms of the legions againſt a race of fanatics, whoſe dire and credulous ſuperſtition ſeemed to

[1] In Cyrene they maſſacred 220,000 Greeks; in Cyprus, 240,000; in Egypt, a very great multitude. Many of theſe unhappy victims were ſawed aſunder, according to a precedent to which David had given the ſanction of his example. The victorious Jews devoured the fleſh, licked up the blood, and twiſted the entrails like a girdle round their bodies. See Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii. p. 1145.

render

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render them the implacable enemies not only of the Roman government, but of humankind[2]. The enthuſiaſm of the Jews was ſupported by the opinion, that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous maſter; and by the flattering promiſe which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Meſſiah would ſoon ariſe, deſtined to break their fetters, and to infeſt the favourites of heaven with the empire of the earth. It was by announcing himſelf as their long-expected deliverer, and by calling on all the deſcendants of Abraham to aſſert the hope of Iſrael, that the famous Barchochebas collected a formidable army, with which he reſiſted during two years the power of the emperor Hadrian[3].

Toleration of the Jewiſh religion.

Notwithſtanding theſe repeated provocations, the reſentment of the Roman princes expired after the victory; nor were their apprehenſions continued beyond the period of war and danger. By the general indulgence of polytheiſm, and by the mild temper of Antoninus Pius, the Jews were reſtored to their ancient privileges, and once more obtained the permiſſion of circumciſing their children, with the eaſy reſtraint, that they ſhould never confer on any foreign proſelyte that diſtinguiſhing mark of the Hebrew race[4]. The numerous remains of that people, though they were ſtill excluded from the precincts of Jeruſalem, were permitted to form and to maintain conſiderable eſtabliſhments both in Italy and in the provinces, to acquire the freedom of Rome, to enjoy municipal honours, and to obtain at the ſame time an exemption from the burdenſome and expenſive offices of ſociety. The moderation or the contempt of the

[2] Without repeating the well-known narratives of Joſephus, we may learn from Dion (l. lxix. p. 1162.), that in Hadrian's war 580,000 Jews were cut off by the ſword, beſides an infinite number which periſhed by famine, by diſeaſe, and by fire.

[3] For the ſect of the Zealots, ſee Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. i. c. 17. for the characters of the Meſſiah, according to the Rabbis, l. v. c. 11, 12, 13. for the actions of Barchochebas, l. vii. c. 12.

[4] It is to Modeſtinus, a Roman lawyer (l. vi. regular.), that we are indebted for a diſtinct knowledge of the Edict of Antoninus. See Caſaubon ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 27.

Romans

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Romans gave a legal ſanction to the form of eccleſiaſtical police which was inſtituted by the vanquiſhed ſect. The patriarch, who had fixed his reſidence at Tiberias, was empowered to appoint his ſubordinate miniſters and apoſtles, to exerciſe a domeſtic juriſdiction, and to receive from his diſperſed brethren an annual contribution [5]. New ſynagogues were frequently erected in the principal cities of the empire; and the ſabbaths, the faſts, and the feſtivals, which were either commanded by the Moſaic law, or enjoined by the traditions of the Rabbis, were celebrated in the moſt ſolemn and public manner [6]. Such gentle treatment inſenſibly aſſuaged the ſtern temper of the Jews. Awakened from their dream of prophecy and conqueſt, they aſſumed the behaviour of peaceable and induſtrious ſubjects. Their irreconcileable hatred of mankind, inſtead of flaming out in acts of blood and violence, evaporated in leſs dangerous gratifications. They embraced every opportunity of over-reaching the idolaters in trade; and they pronounced ſecret and ambiguous imprecations againſt the haughty kingdom of Edom [7].

The Jews were a people which followed, the Chriſtians, a ſect which deſerted, the religion of their fathers.

Since the Jews, who rejected with abhorrence the deities adored by their ſovereign and by their fellow-ſubjects, enjoyed however the free exerciſe of their unſocial religion; there muſt have exiſted ſome other cauſe, which expoſed the diſciples of Chriſt to thoſe ſeverities from which the poſterity of Abraham was exempt. The difference between them is ſimple and obvious; but, according to the ſentiments of antiquity, it was of the higheſt importance. The Jews were a *nation*; the Chriſtians were a *ſect*: and if it was natural for

[5] See Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. iii. c. 2, 3. The office of Patriarch was ſuppreſſed by Theodoſius the younger.

[6] We need only mention the purim, or deliverance of the Jews from the rage of Haman, which, till the reign of Theodoſius, was celebrated with inſolent triumph and riotous intemperance. Baſnage, Hiſt. des Juifs, l. vi. c. 17. l. viii. c. 6.

[7] According to the falſe Joſephus, Tſepho, the grandſon of Eſau, conducted into Italy the army of Æneas, king of Carthage. Another colony of Idumæans, flying from the ſword of David, took refuge in the dominions of Romulus. For theſe, or for other reaſons of equal weight, the name of Edom was applied by the Jews to the Roman empire.

every community to reſpect the ſacred inſtitutions of their neighbours, it was incumbent on them to perſevere in thoſe of their anceſtors. The voice of oracles, the precepts of philoſophers, and the authority of the laws, unanimouſly enforced this national obligation. By their lofty claim of ſuperior ſanctity, the Jews might provoke the Polytheiſts to conſider them as an odious and impure race. By diſdaining the intercourſe of other nations they might deſerve their contempt. The laws of Moſes might be for the moſt part frivolous or abſurd; yet ſince they had been received during many ages by a large ſociety, his followers were juſtified by the example of mankind; and it was univerſally acknowledged, that they had a right to practiſe what it would have been criminal in them to neglect. But this principle which protected the Jewiſh ſynagogue, afforded not any favour or ſecurity to the primitive church. By embracing the faith of the Goſpel, the Chriſtians incurred the ſuppoſed guilt of an unnatural and unpardonable offence. They diſſolved the ſacred ties of cuſtom and education, violated the religious inſtitutions of their country, and preſumptuouſly deſpiſed whatever their fathers had believed as true, or had reverenced as ſacred. Nor was this apoſtacy (if we may uſe the expreſſion) merely of a partial or local kind; ſince the pious deſerter who withdrew himſelf from the temples of Egypt or Syria, would equally diſdain to ſeek an aſylum in thoſe of Athens or Carthage. Every Chriſtian rejected with contempt the ſuperſtitions of his family, his city, and his province. The whole body of Chriſtians unanimouſly refuſed to hold any communion with the gods of Rome, of the empire, and of mankind. It was in vain that the oppreſſed believer aſſerted the inalienable rights of conſcience and private judgment. Though his ſituation might excite the pity, his arguments could never reach the underſtanding, either of the philoſophic or of the believing part of the Pagan world. To their apprehenſions, it was no leſs a matter of ſurpriſe, that any individuals ſhould entertain ſcruples againſt complying with the

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eſtabliſhed mode of worſhip, than if they had conceived a ſudden abhorrence to the manners, the dreſs, or the language of their native country [8].

Chriſtianity accuſed of atheiſm, and miſtaken by the people and philoſophers.

The ſurpriſe of the Pagans was ſoon ſucceeded by reſentment; and the moſt pious of men were expoſed to the unjuſt but dangerous imputation of impiety. Malice and prejudice concurred in repreſenting the Chriſtians as a ſociety of atheiſts, who, by the moſt daring attack on the religious conſtitution of the empire, had merited the ſevereſt animadverſion of the civil magiſtrate. They had ſeparated themſelves (they gloried in the confeſſion) from every mode of ſuperſtition which was received in any part of the globe by the various temper of polytheiſm: but it was not altogether ſo evident what deity, or what form of worſhip, they had ſubſtituted to the gods and temples of antiquity. The pure and ſublime idea which they entertained of the Supreme Being eſcaped the groſs conception of the Pagan multitude, who were at a loſs to diſcover a ſpiritual and ſolitary God, that was neither repreſented under any corporeal figure or viſible ſymbol, nor was adored with the accuſtomed pomp of libations and feſtivals, of altars and ſacrifices [9]. The ſages of Greece and Rome, who had elevated their minds to the contemplation of the exiſtence and attributes of the Firſt Cauſe, were induced by reaſon or by vanity to reſerve for themſelves and their choſen diſciples the privilege of this philoſophical devotion [10]. They were far from admitting the prejudices of mankind as the ſtandard

[8] From the arguments of Celſus, as they are repreſented and refuted by Origen (l. v. p. 247—259.), we may clearly diſcover the diſtinction that was made between the Jewiſh *people* and the Chriſtian *ſect*. See in the Dialogue of Minucius Fœlix (c. 5, 6.) a fair and not inelegant deſcription of the popular ſentiments, with regard to the deſertion of the eſtabliſhed worſhip.

[9] Cur nullas aras habent? templa nulla? nulla nota ſimulacra? - - - Unde autem, vel quis ille, aut ubi, Deus unicus, ſolitarius, deſtitutus? Minucius Fœlix, c. 10. The Pagan interlocutor goes on to make a diſtinction in favour of the Jews, who had once a temple, altars, victims, &c.

[10] It is difficult (ſays Plato) to attain, and dangerous to publiſh, the knowledge of the true God. See the Theologie des Philoſophes, in the Abbé d'Olivet's French tranſlation of Tully de Naturâ Deorum, tom. i. p. 275.

of

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of truth, but they conſidered them as flowing from the original diſpoſition of human nature; and they ſuppoſed that any popular mode of faith and worſhip which preſumed to diſclaim the aſſiſtance of the ſenſes, would, in proportion as it receded from ſuperſtition, find itſelf incapable of reſtraining the wanderings of the fancy and the viſions of fanaticiſm. The careleſs glance which men of wit and learning condeſcended to caſt on the Chriſtian revelation, ſerved only to confirm their haſty opinion, and to perſuade them, that the principle, which they might have revered, of the divine unity, was defaced by the wild enthuſiaſm, and annihilated by the airy ſpeculations, of the new ſectaries. The author of a celebrated dialogue, which has been attributed to Lucian, whilſt he affects to treat the myſterious ſubject of the Trinity in a ſtyle of ridicule and contempt, betrays his own ignorance of the weakneſs of human reaſon, and of the inſcrutable nature of the Divine perfections [11].

It might appear leſs ſurpriſing, that the founder of Chriſtianity ſhould not only be revered by his diſciples as a ſage and a prophet, but that he ſhould be adored as a God. The Polytheiſts were diſpoſed to adopt every article of faith, which ſeemed to offer any reſemblance, however diſtant or imperfect, with the popular mythology; and the legends of Bacchus, of Hercules, and of Æſculapius, had, in ſome meaſure, prepared their imagination for the appearance of the Son of God under a human form [12].

[11] The author of the Philopatris perpetually treats the Chriſtians as a company of dreaming enthuſiaſts, δαιμονιοι, αιθεριοι, αιθεροβατουντες, αεροβατουλες, &c. and in one place, manifeſtly alludes to the viſion, in which St. Paul was tranſported to the third heaven. In another place, Triephon, who perſonates a Chriſtian, after deriding the Gods of Paganiſm, propoſes a myſterious oath,

Υψιμεδοντα θεον, μεγαν, αμβροτον, ερανιωνα,
Υιον παιρος, πνευμα εκ παιρος εκπορευομενον
Εν εκ τριων, κ) εξ ενος τρια
Αριθμειν με διδασκεις, (is the prophane anſwer of Critias), κ) ορκος η αξιθμητικη. ουκ οιδα γαρ τι λεγεις· εν τρια, τρια εν!

[12] According to Juſtin Martyr (Apolog. Major, c. 70–85), the dæmon, who had gained ſome imperfect knowledge of the prophecies, purpoſely contrived this reſemblance, which might deter, though by different means, both the people and the philoſophers from embracing the faith of Chriſt.

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But they were aſtoniſhed that the Chriſtians ſhould abandon the temples of thoſe ancient heroes, who, in the infancy of the world, had invented arts, inſtituted laws, and vanquiſhed the tyrants or monſters who infeſted the earth; in order to chooſe for the excluſive object of their religious worſhip, an obſcure teacher, who, in a recent age, and among a barbarous people, had fallen a ſacrifice either to the malice of his own countrymen, or to the jealouſy of the Roman government. The Pagan multitude, reſerving their gratitude for temporal benefits alone, rejected the ineſtimable preſent of life and immortality, which was offered to mankind by Jeſus of Nazareth. His mild conſtancy in the midſt of cruel and voluntary ſufferings, his univerſal benevolence, and the ſublime ſimplicity of his actions and character, were inſufficient, in the opinion of thoſe carnal men, to compenſate for the want of fame, of empire, and of ſucceſs; and whilſt they refuſed to acknowledge his ſtupendous triumph over the powers of darkneſs and of the grave, they miſrepreſented, or they inſulted, the equivocal birth, wandering life, and ignominious death, of the divine Author of Chriſtianity[13].

The union and aſſemblies of the Chriſtians conſidered as a dangerous conſpiracy.

The perſonal guilt which every Chriſtian had contracted, in thus preferring his private ſentiment to the national religion, was aggravated in a very high degree by the number and union of the criminals. It is well known, and has been already obſerved, that Roman policy viewed with the utmoſt jealouſy and diſtruſt any aſſociation among its ſubjects; and that the privileges of private corporations, though formed for the moſt harmleſs or beneficial purpoſes, were beſtowed with a very ſparing hand[14]. The religious aſſemblies of the

[13] In the firſt and ſecond books of Origen, Celſus treats the birth and character of our Saviour with the moſt impious contempt. The orator Libanius praiſes Porphyry and Julian for confuting the folly of a ſect, which ſtyled a dead man of Paleſtine, God, and the ſon of God. Socrates, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. iii. 23.

[14] The emperor Trajan refuſed to incorporate a company of 150 fire-men, for the uſe of the city of Nicomedia. He diſliked all aſſociations. See Plin. Epiſt. x. 42, 43.

Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, who had ſeparated themſelves from the public worſhip, appeared of a much leſs innocent nature: they were illegal in their principle, and in their conſequences might become dangerous; nor were the emperors conſcious that they violated the laws of juſtice, when, for the peace of ſociety, they prohibited thoſe ſecret and ſometimes nocturnal meetings [15]. The pious diſobedience of the Chriſtians made their conduct, or perhaps their deſigns, appear in a much more ſerious and criminal light; and the Roman princes, who might perhaps have ſuffered themſelves to be diſarmed by a ready ſubmiſſion, deeming their honour concerned in the execution of their commands, ſometimes attempted, by rigorous puniſhments, to ſubdue this independent ſpirit, which boldly acknowledged an authority ſuperior to that of the magiſtrate. The extent and duration of this ſpiritual conſpiracy ſeemed to render it every day more deſerving of his animadverſion. We have already ſeen that the active and ſucceſsful zeal of the Chriſtians had inſenſibly diffuſed them through every province and almoſt every city of the empire. The new converts ſeemed to renounce their family and country, that they might connect themſelves in an indiſſoluble band of union with a peculiar ſociety, which every where aſſumed a different character from the reſt of mankind. Their gloomy and auſtere aſpect, their abhorrence of the common buſineſs and pleaſures of life, and their frequent predictions of impending calamities [16], inſpired the Pagans with the apprehenſion of ſome danger, which would ariſe from the new ſect, the more alarming as it was the more obſcure. "Whatever," ſays Pliny, "may be the principle of their con-

[15] The proconſul Pliny had publiſhed a general edict againſt unlawful meetings. The prudence of the Chriſtians ſuſpended their Agapæ; but it was impoſſible for them to omit the exerciſe of public worſhip.

[16] As the prophecies of the Antichriſt, approaching conflagration, &c. provoked thoſe Pagans whom they did not convert, they were mentioned with caution and reſerve; and the Montaniſts were cenſured for diſcloſing too freely the dangerous ſecret. See Moſheim, p. 413.

"duct,

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" duct, their inflexible obſtinacy appeared deſerving of puniſh-
" ment [17]."

Their manners calumniated.

The precautions with which the diſciples of Chriſt performed the offices of religion were at firſt dictated by fear and neceſſity; but they were continued from choice. By imitating the awful ſecreſy which reigned in the Eleuſinian myſteries, the Chriſtians had flattered themſelves that they ſhould render their ſacred inſtitutions more reſpectable in the eyes of the Pagan world [18]. But the event, as it often happens to the operations of ſubtile policy, deceived their wiſhes and their expectations. It was concluded, that they only concealed, what they would have bluſhed to diſcloſe. Their miſtaken prudence afforded an oportunity for malice to invent, and for ſuſpicious credulity to believe, the horrid tales which deſcribed the Chriſtians as the moſt wicked of human kind, who practiſed in their dark receſſes every abomination that a depraved fancy could ſuggeſt, and who ſolicited the favour of their unknown God by the ſacrifice of every moral virtue. There were many who pretended to confeſs or to relate the ceremonies of this abhorred ſociety. It was aſſerted, " that a new-born infant, entirely covered over with
" flour, was preſented, like ſome myſtic ſymbol of initiation, to the
" knife of the proſelyte, who unknowingly inflicted many a ſecret
" and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his error; that as
" ſoon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the ſectaries drank up the
" blood, greedily tore aſunder the quivering members, and pledged
" themſelves to eternal ſecrecy, by a mutual conſciouſneſs of guilt.
" It was as confidently affirmed, that this inhuman ſacrifice was
" ſucceeded by a ſuitable entertainment, in which intemperance
" ſerved as a provocative to brutal luſt; till, at the appointed mo-

[17] Neque enim dubitabam, quodcunque eſſet quod faterentur (ſuch are the words of Pliny), pervicaciam certe et inflexibilem obſtinationem debere puniri.

[18] See Moſheim's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 101. and Spanheim, Remarques ſur les Cæſars de Julien, p. 468, &c.

" ment,

" ment, the lights were ſuddenly extinguiſhed, ſhame was baniſhed,
" nature was forgotten; and, as accident might direct, the dark-
" neſs of the night was polluted by the inceſtuous commerce of
" ſiſters and brothers, of ſons and of mothers [19]."

Their imprudent defence.

But the peruſal of the ancient apologies was ſufficient to remove even the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion from the mind of a candid adverſary. The Chriſtians, with the intrepid ſecurity of innocence, appeal from the voice of rumour to the equity of the magiſtrates. They acknowledge, that if any proof can be produced of the crimes which calumny has imputed to them, they are worthy of the moſt ſevere puniſhment. They provoke the puniſhment, and they challenge the proof. At the ſame time they urge, with equal truth and propriety, that the charge is not leſs devoid of probability, than it is deſtitute of evidence; they aſk, whether any one can ſeriouſly believe that the pure and holy precepts of the Goſpel, which ſo frequently reſtrain the uſe of the moſt lawful enjoyments, ſhould inculcate the practice of the moſt abominable crimes; that a large ſociety ſhould reſolve to diſhonour itſelf in the eyes of its own members; and that a great number of perſons of either ſex, and every age and character, inſenſible to the fear of death or infamy, ſhould conſent to violate thoſe principles which nature and education had imprinted moſt deeply in their minds [20]. Nothing, it ſhould ſeem, could weaken the force or deſtroy the effect of ſo unanſwerable a juſtification, unleſs it were the injudicious conduct of the apologiſts themſelves, who betrayed the common cauſe of religion, to gratify their devout hatred to the domeſtic ene-

[19] See Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. i. 35. ii. 14. Athenagoras in Legation. c. 27. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 7, 8, 9. Minucius Fœlix, c. 9, 10. 30, 31. The laſt of the writers relates the accuſation in the moſt elegant and circumſtantial manner. The anſwer of Tertullian is the boldeſt and moſt vigorous.

[20] In the perſecution of Lyons, ſome Gentile ſlaves were compelled, by the fear of tortures, to accuſe their Chriſtian maſter. The church of Lyons, writing to their brethren of Aſia, treat the horrid charge with proper indignation and contempt. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. v. 1.

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mies of the church. It was ſometimes faintly inſinuated, and ſometimes boldly aſſerted, that the ſame bloody ſacrifices, and the ſame inceſtuous feſtivals, which were ſo falſely aſcribed to the orthodox believers, were in reality celebrated by the Marcionites, by the Carpocratians, and by ſeveral other ſects of the Gnoſtics, who, notwithſtanding they might deviate into the paths of hereſy, were ſtill actuated by the ſentiments of men, and ſtill governed by the precepts of Chriſtianity[21]. Accuſations of a ſimilar kind were retorted upon the church by the ſchiſmatics who had departed from its communion[22], and it was confeſſed on all ſides, that the moſt ſcandalous licentiouſneſs of manners prevailed among great numbers of thoſe who affected the name of Chriſtians. A Pagan magiſtrate, who poſſeſſed neither leiſure nor abilities to diſcern the almoſt imperceptible line which divides the orthodox faith from heretical pravity, might eaſily have imagined that their mutual animoſity had extorted the diſcovery of their common guilt. It was fortunate for the repoſe, or at leaſt for the reputation, of the firſt Chriſtians, that the magiſtrates ſometimes proceeded with more temper and moderation than is uſually conſiſtent with religious zeal, and that they reported, as the impartial reſult of their judicial inquiry, that the ſectaries, who had deſerted the eſtabliſhed worſhip, appeared to them ſincere in their profeſſions, and blameleſs in their man-

[21] See Juſtin Martyr, Apolog. i. 35. Irenæus adv. Hæreſ. i. 24. Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. l. iii. p. 438. Euſeb. iv. 8. It would be tedious and diſguſting to relate all that the ſucceeding writers have imagined, all that Epiphanius has received, and all that Tillemont has copied. M. de Beauſobre (Hiſt. du Manicheiſme, l. ix. c. 8, 9.) has expoſed, with great ſpirit, the diſingenuous arts of Auguſtin and Pope Leo I.

[22] When Tertullian became a Montaniſt, he aſperſed the morals of the church which he had ſo reſolutely defended. "Sed majoris "eſt Agape, quia per hanc adoleſcentes tui "cum ſororibus dormiunt, appendices ſcili-"cet gulæ laſcivia et luxuria." De Jejuniis, c. 17. The 35th canon of the council of Illiberis provides againſt the ſcandals which too often polluted the vigils of the church, and diſgraced the Chriſtian name, in the eyes of unbelievers.

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ners; however, they might incur, by their abſurd and exceſſive ſuperſtition, the cenſure of the laws[23].

Idea of the conduct of the emperors towards the Chriſtians.

Hiſtory, which undertakes to record the tranſactions of the paſt, for the inſtruction of future, ages; would ill deſerve that honourable office, if ſhe condeſcended to plead the cauſe of tyrants, or to juſtify the maxims of perſecution. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that the conduct of the emperors who appeared the leaſt favourable to the primitive church, is by no means ſo criminal as that of modern ſovereigns, who have employed the arm of violence and terror againſt the religious opinions of any part of their ſubjects. From their reflections, or even from their own feelings, a Charles V. or a Louis XIV. might have acquired a juſt knowledge of the rights of conſcience, of the obligation of faith, and of the innocence of error. But the princes and magiſtrates of ancient Rome were ſtrangers to thoſe principles which inſpired and authoriſed the inflexible obſtinacy of the Chriſtians in the cauſe of truth, nor could they themſelves diſcover in their own breaſts, any motive which would have prompted them to refuſe a legal, and as it were a natural, ſubmiſſion to the ſacred inſtitutions of their country. The ſame reaſon which contributes to alleviate the guilt, muſt have tended to abate the rigour, of their perſecutions. As they were actuated, not by the furious zeal of bigots, but by the temperate policy of legiſlators, contempt muſt often have relaxed, and humanity muſt frequently have ſuſpended the execution of thoſe laws, which they enacted againſt the humble and obſcure followers of Chriſt. From the general view of their character and motives we might naturally conclude: I. That a conſiderable time elapſed before they conſidered the new ſectaries as an object deſerving of the attention of government. II. That in the conviction of any of their ſubjects who

[23] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 2.) expatiates on the fair and honourable teſtimony of Pliny, with much reaſon, and ſome declamation.

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were accuſed of ſo very ſingular a crime, they proceeded with caution and reluctance. III. That they were moderate in the uſe of puniſhments; and IV. That the afflicted church enjoyed many intervals of peace and tranquillity. Notwithſtanding the careleſs indifference which the moſt copious and the moſt minute of the Pagan writers have ſhewn to the affairs of the Chriſtians[24], it may ſtill be in our power to confirm each of theſe probable ſuppoſitions, by the evidence of authentic facts.

They neglected the Chriſtians as a ſect of Jews.

I. By the wiſe diſpenſation of Providence, a myſterious veil was caſt over the infancy of the church, which, till the faith of the Chriſtians was matured, and their numbers were multiplied, ſerved to protect them not only from the malice but even from the knowledge of the pagan world. The ſlow and gradual abolition of the Moſaic ceremonies afforded a ſafe and innocent diſguiſe to the more early proſelytes of the Goſpel. As they were far the greater part of the race of Abraham, they were diſtinguiſhed by the peculiar mark of circumciſion, offered up their devotions in the Temple of Jeruſalem till its final deſtruction, and received both the Law and the Prophets as the genuine inſpirations of the Deity. The Gentile converts, who by a ſpiritual adoption had been aſſociated to the hope of Iſrael, were likewiſe confounded under the garb and appearance of Jews[25], and as the Polytheiſts paid leſs regard to articles of faith than to the external worſhip, the new ſect, which carefully concealed, or faintly announced, its future greatneſs and ambition, was permitted to ſhelter itſelf under the general toleration which was granted to an ancient and celebrated people in the Roman empire. It was not long, perhaps, before the Jews themſelves, animated with a fiercer zeal and a more jealous faith, perceived the gradual ſeparation of

[24] In the various compilation of the Auguſtan Hiſtory (a part of which was compoſed under the reign of Conſtantine), there are not ſix lines which relate to the Chriſtians; nor has the diligence of Xiphilin diſcovered their name in the large hiſtory of Dion Caſſius.

[25] An obſcure paſſage of Suetonius (in Claud. c. 25.) may ſeem to offer a proof how ſtrangely the Jews and Chriſtians of Rome were confounded with each other.

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heir Nazarene brethren from the doctrine of the ſynagogue; and they would gladly have extinguiſhed the dangerous hereſy in the blood of its adherents. But the decrees of heaven had already diſarmed their malice; and though they might ſometimes exert the licentious privilege of ſedition, they no longer poſſeſſed the adminiſtration of criminal juſtice; nor did they find it eaſy to infuſe into the calm breaſt of a Roman magiſtrate the rancour of their own zeal and prejudice. The provincial governors declared themſelves ready to liſten to any accuſation that might affect the public ſafety: but as ſoon as they were informed, that it was a queſtion not of facts but of words, a diſpute relating only to the interpretation of the Jewiſh laws and prophecies, they deemed it unworthy of the majeſty of Rome ſeriouſly to diſcuſs the obſcure differences which might ariſe among a barbarous and ſuperſtitious people. The innocence of the firſt Chriſtians was protected by ignorance and contempt; and the tribunal of the pagan magiſtrate often proved their moſt aſſured refuge againſt the fury of the ſynagogue[26]. If indeed we were diſpoſed to adopt the traditions of a too credulous antiquity, we might relate the diſtant peregrinations, the wonderful atchievements, and the various deaths of the twelve apoſtles: but a more accurate inquiry will induce us to doubt, whether any of thoſe perſons who had been witneſſes to the miracles of Chriſt were permitted beyond the limits of Paleſtine, to ſeal with their blood the truth of their teſtimony[27]. From the ordinary term of human life, it may very naturally be preſumed that moſt of them were deceaſed before the diſcontent of the Jews broke out into that furious war, which was terminated

[26] See in the xviiith and xxvth chapters of the Acts of the Apoſtles, the behaviour of Gallio, proconſul of Achaia, and of Feſtus, procurator of Judea.

[27] In the time of Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria, the glory of martyrdom was confined to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. James. It was gradually beſtowed on the reſt of the apoſtles, by the more recent Greeks, who prudently ſelected for the theatre of their preaching and ſufferings, ſome remote country beyond the limits of the Roman empire. See Moſheim, p. 81. and Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. i. part iii.

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only by the ruin of Jeruſalem. During a long period, from the death of Chriſt to that memorable rebellion, we cannot diſcover any traces of Roman intolerance, unleſs they are to be found in the ſudden, the tranſient, but the cruel perſecution, which was exerciſed by Nero againſt the Chriſtians of the capital, thirty-five years after the former, and only two years before the latter of thoſe great events. The character of the philoſophic hiſtorian, to whom we are principally indebted for the knowledge of this ſingular tranſaction, would alone be ſufficient to recommend it to our moſt attentive conſideration.

The fire of Rome under the reign of Nero.

In the tenth year of the reign of Nero, the capital of the empire was afflicted by a fire which raged beyond the memory or example of former ages[28]. The monuments of Grecian art and of Roman virtue, the trophies of the Punic and Gallic wars, the moſt holy temples, and the moſt ſplendid palaces, were involved in one common deſtruction. Of the fourteen regions or quarters into which Rome was divided, four only ſubſiſted entire, three were levelled with the ground, and the remaining ſeven, which had experienced the fury of the flames, diſplayed a melancholy proſpect of ruin and deſolation. The vigilance of government appears not to have neglected any of the precautions which might alleviate the ſenſe of ſo dreadful a calamity. The Imperial gardens were thrown open to the diſtreſſed multitude, temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation, and a plentiful ſupply of corn and proviſions was diſtributed at a very moderate price[29]. The moſt generous policy ſeemed to have dictated the edicts which regulated the diſpoſition of the ſtreets and the conſtruction of private houſes; and as it uſually happens, in an age of proſperity, the conflagration of Rome, in

[28] Tacit. Annal. xv. 38—44. Sueton. in Neron. c. 38. Dion Caſſius, l. lxii. p. 1014. Oroſius, vii. 7.

[29] The price of wheat (probably of the *modius*) was reduced as low as *terni Nummi*; which would be equivalent to about fifteen ſhillings the Engliſh quarter.

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the courſe of a few years, produced a new city, more regular and more beautiful than the former. But all the prudence and humanity affected by Nero on this occaſion were inſufficient to preſerve him from the popular ſuſpicion. Every crime might be imputed to the aſſaſſin of his wife and mother; nor could the prince, who proſtituted his perſon and dignity on the theatre, be deemed incapable of the moſt extravagant folly. The voice of rumour accuſed the emperor as the incendiary of his own capital; and as the moſt incredible ſtories are the beſt adapted to the genius of an enraged people, it was gravely reported, and firmly believed, that Nero, enjoying the calamity which he had occaſioned, amuſed himſelf with ſinging to his lyre the deſtruction of ancient Troy[30]. To divert a ſuſpicion, which the power of deſpotiſm was unable to ſuppreſs, the emperor reſolved to ſubſtitute in his own place ſome fictitious criminals. "With this view (continues Tacitus) he inflicted the moſt "exquiſite tortures on thoſe men, who, under the vulgar appella- "tion of Chriſtians, were already branded with deſerved infamy. "They derived their name and origin from Chriſt, who in the "reign of Tiberius had ſuffered death, by the ſentence of the pro- "curator Pontius Pilate[31]. For a while, this dire ſuperſtition was "checked; but it again burſt forth; and not only ſpread itſelf over "Judæa, the firſt ſeat of this miſchievous ſect, but was even intro- "duced into Rome, the common aſylum which receives and pro-

Cruel puniſhment of the Chriſtians, as the incendiaries of the city.

[30] We may obſerve, that the rumour is mentioned by Tacitus with a very becoming diſtruſt and heſitation, whilſt it is greedily tranſcribed by Suetonius, and ſolemnly confirmed by Dion.

[31] This teſtimony is alone ſufficient to expoſe the anachroniſm of the Jews, who place the birth of Chriſt near a century ſooner (Baſnage, Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. v. c. 14, 15.). We may learn from Joſephus (Antiquitat. xviii. 3.), that the procuratorſhip of Pilate correſponded with the laſt ten years of Tiberius, A. D. 27—37. As to the particular time of the death of Chriſt, a very early tradition fixed it to the 25th of March, A. D. 29, under the conſulſhip of the two Gemini (Tertullian adv. Judæos, c. 8.). This date, which is adopted by Pagi, cardinal Norris, and Le Clerc, ſeems, at leaſt, as probable as the vulgar æra, which is placed (I know not from what conjectures) four years later.

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" tects, whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confeſſions " of thoſe who were ſeized, diſcovered a great multitude of their " accomplices, and they were all convicted, not ſo much for the " crime of ſetting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human " kind [32]. They died in torments, and their torments were embit- " tered by inſult and deriſion. Some were nailed on croſſes; others " ſewn up in the ſkins of wild beaſts, and expoſed to the fury of " dogs: others again, ſmeared over with combuſtible materials, " were uſed as torches to illuminate the darkneſs of the night. " The gardens of Nero were deſtined for the melancholy ſpectacle, " which was accompanied with a horſe race, and honoured with " the preſence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in " the dreſs and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Chriſt- " ians deſerved indeed the moſt exemplary puniſhment, but the " public abhorrence was changed into commiſeration, from the " opinion that thoſe unhappy wretches were ſacrificed, not ſo much " to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant [33]."

Thoſe who ſurvey with a curious eye the revolutions of mankind, may obſerve, that the gardens and circus of Nero on the Vatican, which were polluted with the blood of the firſt Chriſtians, have been rendered ſtill more famous, by the triumph and by the abuſe of the perſecuted religion. On the ſame ſpot [34], a temple, which far ſurpaſſes the ancient glories of the Capitol, has been ſince erected by

[32] *Odio humani generis convicti.* Theſe words may either ſignify the hatred of mankind towards the Chriſtians, or the hatred of the Chriſtians towards mankind. I have preferred the latter ſenſe, as the moſt agreeable to the ſtyle of Tacitus, and to the popular error, of which a precept of the Goſpel (See Luke xiv. 26.) had been, perhaps, the innocent occaſion. My interpretation is juſtified by the authority of Lipſius; of the Italian, the French and the Engliſh tranſlators of Tacitus; of Moſheim (p. 102.), of Le Clerc (Hiſtoria Eccleſiaſt. p. 427.), of Dr. Lardner (Teſtimonies, vol. i. p. 345.), and of the biſhop of Glouceſter (Divine Legation, vol. iii. p. 38.). But as the word *convicti* does not unite very happily with the reſt of the ſentence, James Gronovius has preferred the reading of *conjuncti*, which is authoriſed by the valuable MS. of Florence.

[33] Tacit. Annal. xv. 44.

[34] Nardini Roma Antica, p. 487. Donatus de Româ Antiquâ, l. iii. p. 449.

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the Chriſtian Pontiffs, who, deriving their claim of univerſal dominion from an humble fiſherman of Galilee, have ſucceeded to the throne of the Cæſars, given laws to the barbarian conquerors of Rome, and extended their ſpiritual jurisdiction from the coaſt of the Baltic to the ſhores of the Pacific Ocean.

But it would be improper to diſmiſs this account of Nero's perſecution, till we have made ſome obſervations, that may ſerve to remove the difficulties with which it is perplexed, and to throw ſome light on the ſubſequent hiſtory of the church.

Remarks on the paſſage of Tacitus relative to the perſecution of the Chriſtians by Nero.

1. The moſt ſceptical criticiſm is obliged to reſpect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated paſſage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the puniſhment which Nero inflicted on the Chriſtians, a ſect of men who had embraced a new and criminal ſuperſtition [35]. The latter may be proved by the conſent of the moſt ancient manuſcripts; by the inimitable character of the ſtyle of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration, which accuſed the firſt Chriſtians of the moſt atrocious crimes, without inſinuating that they poſſeſſed any miraculous or even magical powers above the reſt of mankind [36]. 2. Notwithſtanding it is probable that Tacitus was born ſome years before the fire of Rome [37], he could de-

[35] Sueton. in Nerone, c. 16. The epithet of *malefica*, which ſome ſagacious commentators have tranſlated *magical*, is conſidered by the more rational Moſheim as only ſynonymous to the *exitiabilis* of Tacitus.

[36] The paſſage concerning Jeſus Chriſt, which was inſerted into the text of Joſephus, between the time of Origen and that of Euſebius, may furniſh an example of no vulgar forgery. The accompliſhment of the prophecies, the virtues, miracles, and reſurrection of Jeſus, are diſtinctly related. Joſephus acknowledges that he was the Meſſiah, and heſitates whether he ſhould call him a man. If any doubt can ſtill remain concerning this celebrated paſſage, the reader may examine the pointed objections of Le Fevre (Havercamp. Joſeph. tom. ii. p. 267—273.), the laboured anſwers of Daubuz (p. 187—232.), and the maſterly reply Bibliothéque Ancienne et Moderne, tom. vii. p. 237—288.) of an anonymous critic, whom I believe to have been the learned Abbé de Longuerue.

[37] See the lives of Tacitus by Lipſius and the Abbé de la Bleterie, Dictionnaire de Bayle à l'article TACITE, and Fabricius, Biblioth. Latin. tom. ii. p. 386. Edit. Erneſt.

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rive only from reading and converſation the knowledge of an event which happened during his infancy. Before he gave himſelf to the Public, he calmly waited till his genius had attained its full maturity, and he was more than forty years of age, when a grateful regard for the memory of the virtuous Agricola, extorted from him the moſt early of thoſe hiſtorical compoſitions which will delight and inſtruct the moſt diſtant poſterity. After making a trial of his ſtrength in the life of Agricola and the deſcription of Germany, he conceived, and at length executed, a more arduous work; the hiſtory of Rome, in thirty books, from the fall of Nero to the acceſſion of Nerva. The adminiſtration of Nerva introduced an age of juſtice and proſperity, which Tacitus had deſtined for the occupation of his old age[38]; but when he took a nearer view of his ſubject, judging, perhaps, that it was a more honourable, or a leſs invidious office, to record the vices of paſt tyrants, than to celebrate the virtues of a reigning monarch, he choſe rather to relate, under the form of annals, the actions of the four immediate ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. To collect, to diſpoſe, and to adorn a ſeries of fourſcore years, in an immortal work, every ſentence of which is pregnant with the deepeſt obſervations and the moſt lively images, was an undertaking ſufficient to exerciſe the genius of Tacitus himſelf during the greateſt part of his life. In the laſt years of the reign of Trajan, whilſt the victorious monarch extended the power of Rome beyond its ancient limits, the hiſtorian was deſcribing, in the ſecond and fourth books of his annals, the tyranny of Tiberius[39]; and the emperor Hadrian muſt have ſucceeded to the throne, before Tacitus, in the regular proſecution of his work, could relate the fire of the capital and the cruelty of Nero towards the unfortunate Chriſtians. At the diſtance of ſixty years, it was the duty of the annaliſt to

[38] Principatum Divi Nervæ, et imperium Trajani, uberiorem ſecurioremque materiam ſenectuti ſepoſui. Tacit. Hiſt. i.

[39] See Tacit. Annal. ii. 61. iv. 4.

adopt

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adopt the narratives of cotemporaries; but it was natural for the philoſopher to indulge himſelf in the deſcription of the origin, the progreſs, and the character of the new ſect, not ſo much according to the knowledge or prejudices of the age of Nero, as according to thoſe of the time of Hadrian. 3. Tacitus very frequently truſts to the curioſity or reflection of his readers to ſupply thoſe intermediate circumſtances and ideas, which, in his extreme conciſeneſs, he has thought proper to ſuppreſs. We may therefore preſume to imagine ſome probable cauſe which could direct the cruelty of Nero againſt the Chriſtians of Rome, whoſe obſcurity, as well as innocence, ſhould have ſhielded them from his indignation, and even from his notice. The Jews, who were numerous in the capital, and oppreſſed in their own country, were a much fitter object for the ſuſpicions of the emperor and of the people; nor did it ſeem unlikely that a vanquiſhed nation, who already diſcovered their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, might have recourſe to the moſt atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews poſſeſſed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart of the tyrant; his wife and miſtreſs, the beautiful Poppæa, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham, who had already employed their interceſſion in behalf of the obnoxious people[40]. In their room it was neceſſary to offer ſome other victims, and it might eaſily be ſuggeſted that, although the genuine followers of Moſes were innocent of the fire of Rome, there had ariſen among them a new and pernicious ſect of GALILÆANS, which was capable of the moſt horrid crimes. Under the appellation of GALILÆANS, two diſtinctions of men were confounded, the moſt oppoſite to each other in their manners and principles; the diſciples who had em-

[40] The player's name was Aliturus. Through the ſame channel, Joſephus (de Vitâ ſuâ, c. 3.), about two years before, had obtained the pardon and releaſe of ſome Jewiſh prieſts who were priſoners at Rome.

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braced the faith of Jeſus of Nazareth [41], and the zealots who had followed the ſtandard of Judas the Gaulonite [42]. The former were the friends, the latter were the enemies, of humankind; and the only reſemblance between them conſiſted in the ſame inflexible conſtancy, which, in the defence of their cauſe, rendered them inſenſible of death and tortures. The followers of Judas, who impelled their countrymen into rebellion, were ſoon buried under the ruins of Jeruſalem; whilſt thoſe of Jeſus, known by the more celebrated name of Chriſtians, diffuſed themſelves over the Roman empire. How natural was it for Tacitus, in the time of Hadrian, to appropriate to the Chriſtians, the guilt and the ſufferings, which he might, with far greater truth and juſtice, have attributed to a ſect whoſe odious memory was almoſt extinguiſhed! 4. Whatever opinion may be entertained of this conjecture (for it is no more than a conjecture), it is evident that the effect, as well as the cauſe, of Nero's perſecution, were confined to the walls of Rome [43]; that the religious tenets of the Galilæans, or Chriſtians, were never made a ſubject of puniſhment, or even of inquiry; and that, as the idea of their ſufferings was, for a long time, connected with the idea of cruelty and injuſtice, the moderation of ſucceeding princes inclined them to ſpare a ſect, oppreſſed by a tyrant, whoſe rage had been uſually directed againſt virtue and innocence.

Oppreſſion of the Jews and Chriſtians by Domitian.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the flames of war conſumed almoſt at the ſame time the temple of Jeruſalem and the Capitol of

[41] The learned Dr. Lardner (Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. ii. p. 102, 103.) has proved that the name of Galilæans, was a very ancient, and perhaps the primitive, appellation of the Chriſtians.

[42] Joſeph. Antiquitat. xviii. 1, 2. Tillemont, Ruine des Juifs, p. 742. The ſons of Judas were crucified in the time of Claudius. His grandſon Eleazar, after Jeruſalem was taken, defended a ſtrong fortreſs with 960 of his moſt deſperate followers. When the battering ram had made a breach, they turned their ſwords againſt their wives, their children, and at length againſt their own breaſts. They died to the laſt man.

[43] See Dodwell. Paucitat. Mart. l. xiii. The Spaniſh Inſcription in Gruter, p. 238, No. 9, is a manifeſt and acknowledged forgery, contrived by that noted impoſtor Cyriacus of Ancona, to flatter the pride and prejudices of the Spaniards. See Ferreras, Hiſtoire d'Eſpagne, tom. i. p. 192.

Rome;

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Rome [44]; and it appears no leſs ſingular, that the tribute which devotion had deſtined to the former, ſhould have been converted by the power of an aſſaulting victor to reſtore and adorn the ſplendour of the latter [45]. The emperors levied a general capitation tax on the Jewiſh people; and although the ſum aſſeſſed on the head of each individual was inconſiderable, the uſe for which it was deſigned, and the ſeverity with which it was exacted, were conſidered as an intolerable grievance [46]. Since the officers of the revenue extended their unjuſt claim to many perſons who were ſtrangers to the blood or religion of the Jews, it was impoſſible that the Chriſtians, who had ſo often ſheltered themſelves under the ſhade of the ſynagogue, ſhould now eſcape this rapacious perſecution. Anxious as they were to avoid the ſlighteſt infection of idolatry, their conſcience forbade them to contribute to the honour of that dæmon who had aſſumed the character of the Capitoline Jupiter. As a very numerous though declining party among the Chriſtians ſtill adhered to the law of Moſes, their efforts to diſſemble their Jewiſh origin were detected by the deciſive teſt of circumciſion [47]: nor were the Roman magiſtrates at leiſure to inquire into the difference of their religious tenets. Among the Chriſtians, who were brought before the tribunal of the emperor, or, as it ſeems more probable, before that of the procurator of Judæa, two perſons are ſaid to have appeared, diſ-

[44] The Capitol was burnt during the civil war between Vitellius and Veſpaſian, the 19th of December, A. D. 69. On the 10th of Auguſt, A. D. 70, the temple of Jeruſalem was deſtroyed by the hands of the Jews themſelves, rather than by thoſe of the Romans.

[45] The new Capitol was dedicated by Domitian. Sueton. in Domitian. c. 5. Plutarch in Poplicola, tom. i. p. 230. Edit. Bryan. The gilding alone coſt 12,000 talents (above two millions and a half). It was the opinion of Martial (l. ix. Epigram 3.), that if the emperor had called in his debts, Jupiter himſelf, even though he had made a general auction of Olympus, would have been unable to pay two ſhillings in the pound.

[46] With regard to the tribute, ſee Dion Caſſius, l. lxvi. p. 1082, with Reimarus's notes. Spanheim, de Uſû Numiſmatum, tom. ii. p. 571. and Baſnage, Hiſt. des Juifs, l. vii. c. 2.

[47] Suetonius (in Domitian. c. 12.) had ſeen an old man of ninety publicly examined before the procurator's tribunal. This is what Martial calls, Mentula tributis damnata.

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tinguiſhed by their extraction, which was more truly noble than that of the greateſt monarchs. Theſe were the grandſons of St. Jude the apoſtle, who himſelf was the brother of Jeſus Chriſt [48]. Their natural pretenſions to the throne of David might perhaps attract the reſpect of the people, and excite the jealouſy of the governor; but the meanneſs of their garb, and the ſimplicity of their anſwers, ſoon convinced him that they were neither deſirous nor capable of diſturbing the peace of the Roman empire. They frankly confeſſed their royal origin, and their near relation to the Meſſiah; 'but they diſclaimed any temporal views, and profeſſed that his kingdom, which they devoutly expected, was purely of a ſpiritual and angelic nature. When they were examined concerning their fortune and occupation, they ſhewed their hands hardened with daily labour, and declared that they derived their whole ſubſiſtence from the cultivation of a farm near the village of Cocaba, of the extent of about twenty-four Engliſh acres [49], and of the value of nine thouſand drachms, or three hundred pounds ſterling. The grandſons of St. Jude were diſmiſſed with compaſſion and contempt [50].

Execution of Clemens the conſul.

But although the obſcurity of the houſe of David might protect them from the ſuſpicions of a tyrant, the preſent greatneſs of his own family alarmed the puſillanimous temper of Domitian, which could only be appeaſed by the blood of thoſe Romans whom he

[48] This appellation was at firſt underſtood in the moſt obvious ſenſe, and it was ſuppoſed, that the brothers of Jeſus were the lawful iſſue of Joſeph and of Mary. A devout reſpect for the virginity of the mother of God, ſuggeſted to the Gnoſtics, and afterwards to the orthodox Greeks, the expedient of beſtowing a ſecond wife on Joſeph. The Latins (from the time of Jerome) improved on that hint, aſſerted the perpetual celibacy of Joſeph, and juſtified by many ſimilar examples the new interpretation that Jude, as well as Simon and James, who are ſtyled the brothers of Jeſus Chriſt, were only his firſt couſins. See Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. i. part iii. and Beauſobre, Hiſt. Critique du Manicheiſme, l. ii. c. 2.

[49] Thirty-nine πλεθρα, ſquares of an hundred feet each, which, if ſtrictly computed, would ſcarcely amount to nine acres. But the probability of circumſtances, the practice of other Greek writers, and the authority of M. de Valois, incline me to believe that the πλεθρον is uſed to expreſs the Roman jugerum.

[50] Euſebius, iii. 20. The ſtory is taken from Hegeſippus.

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either feared, or hated, or eſteemed. Of the two ſons of his uncle Flavius Sabinus [51], the elder was ſoon convicted of treaſonable intentions, and the younger, who bore the name of Flavius Clemens, was indebted for his ſafety to his want of courage and ability [52]. The emperor, for a long time, diſtinguiſhed ſo harmleſs a kinſman by his favour and protection, beſtowed on him his own niece Domitilla, adopted the children of that marriage to the hope of the ſucceſſion, and inveſted their father with the honours of the conſulſhip. But he had ſcarcely finiſhed the term of his annual magiſtracy, when on a ſlight pretence he was condemned and executed; Domitilla was baniſhed to a deſolate iſland on the coaſt of Campania [53]; and ſentences either of death or of confiſcation were pronounced againſt a great number of perſons who were involved in the ſame accuſation. The guilt imputed to their charge was that of *Atheiſm* and *Jewiſh manners* [54]; a ſingular aſſociation of ideas, which cannot with any propriety be applied except to the Chriſtians, as they were obſcurely and imperfectly viewed by the magiſtrates and by the writers of that period. On the ſtrength of ſo probable an interpretation, and too eagerly admitting the ſuſpicions of a tyrant as an evidence of their honourable crime, the church has placed both Clemens and Domitilla among its firſt martyrs, and has branded the cruelty of Domitian with the name of the ſecond perſecution. But this perſecution (if it deſerves that epithet) was of no long duration. A few months after the death of Clemens,

[51] See the death and character of Sabinus in Tacitus (Hiſt. iii. 74, 75.). Sabinus was the elder brother, and, till the acceſſion of Veſpaſian, had been conſidered as the principal ſupport of the Flavian family.

[52] Flavium Clementem patruelem ſuum *contemtiſſimæ inertiæ* . . . ex tenuiſſimâ ſuſpicione interemit. Sueton. in Domitian. c. 15.

[53] The iſle of Pandataria, according to Dion. Bruttius Præſens (apud Euſeb. iii. 18.) baniſhes her to that of Pontia, which was not far diſtant from the other. That difference, and a miſtake, either of Euſebius, or of his tranſcribers, have given occaſion to ſuppoſe two Domitillas, the wife and the niece of Clemens. See Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. ii. p. 224.

[54] Dion, l. lxvii. p. 1112. If the Bruttius Præſens, from whom it is probable that he collected this account, was the correſpondent of Pliny (Epiſtol. vii. 3.), we may conſider him as a contemporary writer.

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and the baniſhment of Domitilla, Stephen, a freedman belonging to the latter, who had enjoyed the favour, but who had not ſurely embraced the faith, of his miſtreſs, aſſaſſinated the emperor in his palace [55]. The memory of Domitian was condemned by the ſenate; his acts were reſcinded; his exiles recalled; and under the gentle adminiſtration of Nerva, while the innocent were reſtored to their rank and fortunes, even the moſt guilty either obtained pardon or eſcaped puniſhment [56].

Ignorance of Pliny concerning the Chriſtians.

II. About ten years afterwards, under the reign of Trajan, the younger Pliny was intruſted by his friend and maſter with the government of Bithynia and Pontus. He ſoon found himſelf at a loſs to determine by what rule of juſtice or of law he ſhould direct his conduct in the execution of an office the moſt repugnant to his humanity. Pliny had never aſſiſted at any judicial proceedings againſt the Chriſtians, with whoſe name alone he ſeems to be acquainted; and he was totally uninformed with regard to the nature of their guilt, the method of their conviction, and the degree of their puniſhment. In this perplexity he had recourſe to his uſual expedient, of ſubmitting to the wiſdom of Trajan an impartial, and in ſome reſpects, a favourable, account of the new ſuperſtition, requeſting the emperor, that he would condeſcend to reſolve his doubts, and to inſtruct his ignorance [57]. The life of Pliny had been employed in the acquiſition of learning, and in the buſineſs of the world. Since the age of nineteen he had pleaded with diſtinction in the tribunals of Rome [58], filled a place in the ſenate, had

[55] Sueton. in Domit. c. 17. Philoſtratus in Vit. Apollon. l. viii.

[56] Dion, l. lxviii. p. 1118. Plin. Epiſtol. iv. 22.

[57] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 97. The learned Moſheim expreſſes himſelf (p. 147. 232.) with the higheſt approbation of Pliny's moderate and candid temper. Notwithſtanding Dr. Lardner's ſuſpicions (ſee Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. ii. p. 46.), I am unable to diſcover any bigotry in his language or proceedings.

[58] Plin. Epiſtol. v. 8. He pleaded his firſt cauſe A. D. 81; the year after the famous eruptions of Mount Veſuvius, in which his uncle loſt his life.

been inveſted with the honours of the conſulſhip, and had formed very numerous connexions with every order of men, both in Italy and in the provinces. From *his* ignorance therefore we may derive ſome uſeful information. We may aſſure ourſelves, that when he accepted the government of Bithynia, there were no general laws or decrees of the ſenate in force againſt the Chriſtians; that neither Trajan nor any of his virtuous predeceſſors, whoſe edicts were received into the civil and criminal juriſprudence, had publicly declared their intentions concerning the new ſect; and that whatever proceedings had been carried on againſt the Chriſtians, there were none of ſufficient weight and authority to eſtabliſh a precedent for the conduct of a Roman magiſtrate.

Trajan and his ſucceſſors eſtabliſh a legal mode of proceeding againſt them.

The anſwer of Trajan, to which the Chriſtians of the ſucceeding age have frequently appealed, diſcovers as much regard for juſtice and humanity as could be reconciled with his miſtaken notions of religious policy [59]. Inſtead of diſplaying the implacable zeal of an inquiſitor, anxious to diſcover the moſt minute particles of hereſy, and exulting in the number of his victims, the emperor expreſſes much more ſolicitude to protect the ſecurity of the innocent, than to prevent the eſcape of the guilty. He acknowledges the difficulty of fixing any general plan; but he lays down two ſalutary rules, which often afforded relief and ſupport to the diſtreſſed Chriſtians. Though he directs the magiſtrates to puniſh ſuch perſons as are legally convicted, he prohibits them, with a very humane inconſiſtency, from making any inquiries concerning the ſuppoſed criminals. Nor was the magiſtrate allowed to proceed on every kind of information. Anonymous charges the emperor rejects, as too repugnant to the equity of his government;

[59] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 98. Tertullian (Apolog. c. 5.) conſiders this reſcript as a relaxation of the ancient penal laws, "quas Trajanus ex parte fruſtratus eſt:" and yet Tertullian, in another part of his Apologiſts, expoſe the inconſiſtency of prohibiting inquiries, and enjoining puniſhments.

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and he ſtrictly requires, for the conviction of thoſe to whom the guilt of Chriſtianity is imputed, the poſitive evidence of a fair and open accuſer. It is likewiſe probable, that the perſons who aſſumed ſo invidious an office, were obliged to declare the grounds of their ſuſpicions, to ſpecify (both in reſpect to time and place) the ſecret aſſemblies, which their Chriſtian adverſary had frequented, and to diſcloſe a great number of circumſtances, which were concealed with the moſt vigilant jealouſy from the eye of the profane. If they ſucceeded in their proſecution, they were expoſed to the reſentment of a conſiderable and active party, to the cenſure of the more liberal portion of mankind, and to the ignominy which, in every age and country, has attended the character of an informer. If, on the contrary, they failed in their proofs, they incurred the ſevere and perhaps capital penalty, which, according to a law publiſhed by the emperor Hadrian, was inflicted on thoſe who falſely attributed to their fellow-citizens the crime of Chriſtianity. The violence of perſonal or ſuperſtitious animoſity might ſometimes prevail over the moſt natural apprehenſions of diſgrace and danger; but it cannot ſurely be imagined, that accuſations of ſo unpromiſing an appearance were either lightly or frequently undertaken by the Pagan ſubjects of the Roman empire [60].

Popular clamours.

The expedient which was employed to elude the prudence of the laws, affords a ſufficient proof how effectually they diſappointed the miſchievous deſigns of private malice or ſuperſtitious zeal. In a large and tumultuous aſſembly the reſtraints of fear and ſhame, ſo forcible on the minds of individuals, are deprived of the greateſt part of their influence. The pious Chriſtian, as he was deſirous to obtain or to eſcape the glory of martyrdom,

[60] Euſebius (Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. iv. c. 9.) has preſerved the edict of Hadrian. He has likewiſe (c. 13.) given us one ſtill more favourable under the name of Antoninus; the authenticity of which is not ſo univerſally allowed. The ſecond apology of Juſtin contains ſome curious particulars relative to the accuſations of Chriſtians.

expected,

expected, either with impatience or with terror, the ſtated returns of the public games and feſtivals. On thoſe occaſions, the inhabitants of the great cities of the empire were collected in the circus of the theatre, where every circumſtance of the place, as well as of the ceremony, contributed to kindle their devotion, and to extinguiſh their humanity. Whilſt the numerous ſpectators, crowned with garlands, perfumed with incenſe, purified with the blood of victims, and ſurrounded with the altars and ſtatues of their tutelar deities, reſigned themſelves to the enjoyment of pleaſures, which they conſidered as an eſſential part of their religious worſhip; they recollected that the Chriſtians alone abhorred the gods of mankind, and by their abſence and melancholy on theſe ſolemn feſtivals, ſeemed to inſult or to lament the public felicity. If the empire had been afflicted by any recent calamity, by a plague, a famine, or an unſucceſsful war; if the Tiber had, or if the Nile had not, riſen beyond its banks; if the earth had ſhaken, or if the temperate order of the ſeaſons had been interrupted, the ſuperſtitious Pagans were convinced, that the crimes and the impiety of the Chriſtians, who were ſpared by the exceſſive lenity of the government, had at length provoked the Divine Juſtice. It was not among a licentious and exaſperated populace, that the forms of legal proceedings could be obſerved; it was not in an amphitheatre, ſtained with the blood of wild beaſts and gladiators, that the voice of compaſſion could be heard. The impatient clamours of the multitude denounced the Chriſtians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the ſevereſt tortures, and venturing to accuſe by name ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the new ſectaries, required with irreſiſtible vehemence that they ſhould be inſtantly apprehended and caſt to the lions[61]. The provincial governors

[61] See Tertullian (Apolog. c. 40.). The acts of the martyrdom of Polycarp exhibit a lively picture of theſe tumults, which were uſually fomented by the malice of the Jews.

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and magiſtrates who preſided in the public ſpectacles were uſually inclined to gratify the inclinations, and to appeaſe the rage, of the people, by the ſacrifice of a few obnoxious victims. But the wiſdom of the emperors protected the church from the danger of theſe tumultuous clamours and irregular accuſations, which they juſtly cenſured as repugnant both to the firmneſs and to the equity of their adminiſtration. The edicts of Hadrian and of Antoninus Pius expreſsly declared, that the voice of the multitude ſhould never be admitted as legal evidence to convict or to puniſh thoſe unfortunate perſons who had embraced the enthuſiaſm of the Chriſtians[62].

Trials of the Chriſtians.

III. Puniſhment was not the inevitable conſequence of conviction, and the Chriſtians, whoſe guilt was the moſt clearly proved by the teſtimony of witneſſes, or even by their voluntary confeſſion, ſtill retained in their own power the alternative of life or death. It was not ſo much the paſt offence, as the actual reſiſtance, which excited the indignation of the magiſtrate. He was perſuaded that he offered them an eaſy pardon, ſince if they conſented to caſt a few grains of incenſe upon the altar, they were diſmiſſed from the tribunal in ſafety and with applauſe. It was eſteemed the duty of a humane judge to endeavour to reclaim, rather than to puniſh, thoſe deluded enthuſiaſts. Varying his tone according to the age, the ſex, or the ſituation of the priſoners, he frequently condeſcended to ſet before their eyes every circumſtance which could render life more pleaſing, or death more terrible; and to ſolicit, nay to intreat, them, that they would ſhew ſome compaſſion to themſelves, to their families, and to their friends[63]. If threats and perſuaſions proved ineffectual, he had often recourſe to violence; the ſcourge and the rack were called in to ſupply the deficiency of argument, and every

[62] Theſe regulations are inſerted in the above-mentioned edicts of Hadrian and Pius. See the apology of Melito (apud Euſeb. l. iv. c. 26.).

[63] See the reſcript of Trajan, and the conduct of Pliny. The moſt authentic acts of the martyrs abound in theſe exhortations.

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art of cruelty was employed to ſubdue ſuch inflexible, and, as it appeared to the Pagans, ſuch criminal, obſtinacy. The ancient apologiſts of Chriſtianity have cenſured, with equal truth and ſeverity, the irregular conduct of their perſecutors, who, contrary to every principle of judicial proceeding, admitted the uſe of torture, in order to obtain, not a confeſſion, but a denial, of the crime which was the object of their inquiry[64]. The monks of ſucceeding ages, who, in their peaceful ſolitudes, entertained themſelves with diverſifying the deaths and ſufferings of the primitive martyrs, have frequently invented torments of a much more refined and ingenious nature. In particular, it has pleaſed them to ſuppoſe, that the zeal of the Roman magiſtrates, diſdaining every conſideration of moral virtue or public decency, endeavoured to ſeduce thoſe whom they were unable to vanquiſh, and that by their orders the moſt brutal violence was offered to thoſe whom they found it impoſſible to ſeduce. It is related, that pious females, who were prepared to deſpiſe death, were ſometimes condemned to a more ſevere trial, and called upon to determine whether they ſet a higher value on their religion or on their chaſtity. The youths to whoſe licentious embraces they were abandoned, received a ſolemn exhortation from the judge, to exert their moſt ſtrenuous efforts to maintain the honour of Venus againſt the impious virgin who refuſed to burn incenſe on her altars. Their violence however was commonly diſappointed, and the ſeaſonable interpoſition of ſome miraculous power preſerved the chaſte ſpouſes of Chriſt from the diſhonour even of an involuntary defeat. We ſhould not indeed neglect to remark, that the more ancient as well as authentic memorials of the church are ſeldom polluted with theſe extravagant and indecent fictions[65].

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[64] In particular, ſee Tertullian (Apol. c. 2, 3.), and Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. v. 9.). Their reaſonings are almoſt the ſame; but we may diſcover, that one of theſe apologiſts had been a lawyer, and the other a rhetorician.

[65] See two inſtances of this kind of torture in the Acta Sincera Martyrum, publiſhed by Ruinart,

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Humanity of the Roman magiſtrates.

The total difregard of truth and probability in the repreſentation of theſe primitive martyrdoms was occaſioned by a very natural miſtake. The eccleſiaſtical writers of the fourth or fifth centuries aſcribed to the magiſtrates of Rome the ſame degree of implacable and unrelenting zeal which filled their own breaſts againſt the heretics or the idolators of their own times. It is not improbable that ſome of thoſe perſons who were raiſed to the dignities of the empire, might have imbibed the prejudices of the populace, and that the cruel diſpoſition of others might occaſionally be ſtimulated by motives of avarice or of perſonal reſentment[66]. But it is certain, and we may appeal to the grateful confeſſions of the firſt Chriſtians, that the greateſt part of thoſe magiſtrates who exerciſed in the provinces the authority of the emperor, or of the ſenate, and to whoſe hands alone the juriſdiction of life and death was intruſted, behaved like men of poliſhed manners and liberal educations, who reſpected the rules of juſtice, and who were converſant with the precepts of philoſophy. They frequently declined the odious taſk of perſecution, diſmiſſed the charge with contempt, or ſuggeſted to the accuſed Chriſtian ſome legal evaſion, by which he might elude the ſeverity of the laws[67]. Whenever they were inveſted with a diſcretionary power[68], they uſed it much leſs for the oppreſſion, than for the relief and benefit of the afflicted church. They were far from condemning all the Chriſtians who were accuſed before their tribunal, and very far from puniſhing with death

Ruinart, p. 160. 399. Jerome, in his Legend of Paul the Hermit, tells a ſtrange ſtory of a young man, who was chained naked on a bed of flowers, and aſſaulted by a beautiful and wanton courtezan. He quelled the riſing temptation by biting off his tongue.

[66] The converſion of his wife provoked Claudius Herminianus, governor of Cappadocia, to treat the Chriſtians with uncommon ſeverity. Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3.

[67] Tertullian, in his epiſtle to the governor of Africa, mentions ſeveral remarkable inſtances of lenity and forbearance, which had happened within his knowledge.

[68] Neque enim in univerſum aliquid quod quaſi certam formam habeat, conſtitui poteſt: an expreſſion of Trajan, which gave a very great latitude to the governors of provinces.

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all thoſe who were convicted of an obſtinate adherence to the new ſuperſtition. Contenting themſelves, for the moſt part, with the milder chaſtiſements of impriſonment, exile, or ſlavery in the mines[69], they left the unhappy victims of their juſtice ſome reaſon to hope, that a proſperous event, the acceſſion, the marriage, or the triumph of an emperor, might ſpeedily reſtore them by a general pardon to their former ſtate. The martyrs, devoted to immediate execution by the Roman magiſtrates, appear to have been ſelected from the moſt oppoſite extremes. They were either biſhops and preſbyters, the perſons the moſt diſtinguiſhed among the Chriſtians by their rank and influence, and whoſe example might ſtrike terror into the whole ſect[70]; or elſe they were the meaneſt and moſt abject among them, particularly thoſe of the ſervile condition whoſe lives were eſteemed of little value, and whoſe ſufferings were viewed by the ancients with too careleſs an indifference[71]. The learned Origen, who, from his experience as well as reading, was intimately acquainted with the hiſtory of the Chriſtians, declares, in the moſt expreſs terms, that the number of martyrs was very inconſiderable[72]. His authority would alone be ſufficient to annihilate that formidable army of martyrs, whoſe relics, drawn for the moſt part from the catacombs of Rome, have repleniſhed ſo many churches[73], and whoſe

Inconſiderable number of martyrs.

[69] In Metalla damnamur, in inſulas relegemur. Tertullian. Apolog. c. 12. The mines of Numidia contained nine biſhops, with a proportionable number of their clergy and people, to whom Cyprian addreſſed a pious epiſtle of praiſe and comfort. See Cyprian. Epiſtol. 76, 77.

[70] Though we cannot receive with entire confidence, either the epiſtles, or the acts, of Ignatius (they may be found in the 2d volume of the Apoſtolic Fathers), yet we may quote that biſhop of Antioch as one of theſe *exemplary* martyrs. He was ſent in chains to Rome as a public ſpectacle: and when he arrived at Troas, he received the pleaſing intelligence, that the perſecution of Antioch was already at an end.

[71] Among the martyrs of Lyons (Euſeb. l. v. c. 1.), the ſlave Blandina was diſtinguiſhed by more exquiſite tortures. Of the five martyrs ſo much celebrated in the acts of Felicitas and Perpetua, two were of a ſervile, and two others of a very mean, condition.

[72] Origen adverſ. Celſum, l. iii. p. 116. His words deſerve to be tranſcribed. "Ολιγοι κατα καιρους, και σφοδρα ευκριθμητοι περι των Χριστιανων θεοσεβειας τεθνηκασι."

[73] If we recollect that *all* the Plebeians of Rome were not Chriſtians, and that all the Chriſtians were not ſaints and martyrs, we may

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whoſe marvellous atchievements have been the ſubject of ſo many volumes of Holy Romance[74]. But the general aſſertion of Origen may be explained and confirmed by the particular teſtimony of his friend Dionyſius, who, in the immenſe city of Alexandria, and under the rigorous perſecution of Decius, reckons only ten men and ſeven women who ſuffered for the profeſſion of the Chriſtian name[75].

Example of Cyprian biſhop of Carthage.

During the ſame period of perſecution, the zealous, the eloquent, the ambitious Cyprian governed the church, not only of Carthage, but even of Africa. He poſſeſſed every quality which could engage the reverence of the faithful, or provoke the ſuſpicions and reſentment of the Pagan magiſtrates. His character as well as his ſtation ſeemed to mark out that holy prelate as the moſt diſtinguiſhed object of envy and of danger[76]. The experience, however, of the life of Cyprian, is ſufficient to prove, that our fancy has exaggerated the perilous ſituation of a Chriſtian biſhop; and that the dangers to which

may judge with how much ſafety religious honours can be aſcribed to bones or urns, indiſcriminately taken from the public burial-place. After ten centuries of a very free and open trade, ſome ſuſpicions have ariſen among the more learned catholics. They now require, as a proof of ſanctity and martyrdom, the letters B M, a viol full of red liquor, ſuppoſed to be blood, or the figure of a palm-tree. But the two former ſigns are of little weight, and with regard to the laſt, it is obſerved by the critics, 1. That the figure, as it is called, of a palm, is perhaps a cypreſs, and perhaps only a ſtop, the flouriſh of a comma, uſed in the monumental inſcriptions. 2. That the palm was the ſymbol of victory among the Pagans. 3. That among the Chriſtians it ſerved as the emblem, not only of martyrdom, but in general of a joyful reſurrection. See the epiſtle of P. Mabillon, on the worſhip of unknown ſaints, and Muratori ſopra le Antichitâ Italiane, Diſſertat. lviii.

[74] As a ſpecimen of theſe legends, we may be ſatisfied with 10,000 Chriſtian ſoldiers crucified in one day, either by Trajan or Hadrian, on mount Ararat. See Baronius ad Martyrologium Romanum. Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. ii. part ii. p. 438. and Geddes's Miſcellanies, vol. ii. p. 203. The abbreviation of MIL. which may ſignify either *ſoldiers* or *thouſands*, is ſaid to have occaſioned ſome extraordinary miſtakes.

[75] Dionyſius ap. Euſeb. l. vi. c. 41. One of the ſeventeen was likewiſe accuſed of robbery.

[76] The letters of Cyprian exhibit a very curious and original picture, both of the *man* and of the *times*. See likewiſe the two lives of Cyprian, compoſed with equal accuracy, though with very different views; the one by Le Clerc (Bibliothéque Univerſelle, tom. xii. p. 208—378.), the other by Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. iv. part i. p. 76—459.

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he was expoſed were leſs imminent than thoſe which temporal ambition is always prepared to encounter in the purſuit of honours. Four Roman emperors, with their families, their favourites, and their adherents, periſhed by the ſword in the ſpace of ten years, during which, the biſhop of Carthage guided by his authority and eloquence the counſels of the African church. It was only in the third year of his adminiſtration, that he had reaſon, during a few months, to apprehend the ſevere edicts of Decius, the vigilance of the magiſtrate, and the clamours of the multitude, who loudly demanded, that Cyprian, the leader of the Chriſtians, ſhould be thrown to the lions. Prudence ſuggeſted the neceſſity of a temporary retreat, and the voice of prudence was obeyed. He withdrew himſelf into an obſcure ſolitude, from whence he could maintain a conſtant correſpondence with the clergy and people of Carthage; and concealing himſelf till the tempeſt was paſt, he preſerved his life, without relinquiſhing either his power or his reputation. His extreme caution did not however eſcape the cenſure of the more rigid Chriſtians who lamented, or the reproaches of his perſonal enemies who inſulted, a conduct which they conſidered as a puſillanimous and criminal deſertion of the moſt ſacred duty[77]. The propriety of reſerving himſelf for the future exigencies of the church, the example of ſeveral holy biſhops[78], and the divine admonitions which, as he declares himſelf, he frequently received in viſions and extaſies, were the reaſons alleged in his juſtification[79]. But his beſt apology may be found in the cheerful reſolution, with which, about eight years afterwards, he ſuffered death in the cauſe of religion. The authentic hiſtory

His danger and flight.

[77] See the polite but ſevere epiſtle of the clergy of Rome, to the biſhop of Carthage (Cyprian Epiſt. 8, 9.). Pontius labours with the greateſt care and diligence to juſtify his maſter againſt the general cenſure.

[78] In particular thoſe of Dionyſius of Alexandria, and Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Cæſarea. See Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vi. c. 40. and Memoires de Tillemont, tom. iv. part ii. p. 685.

[79] See Cyprian, Epiſt. 16. and his life by Pontius.

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of his martyrdom has been recorded with unuſual candour and impartiality. A ſhort abſtract therefore of its moſt important circumſtances will convey the cleareſt information of the ſpirit, and of the forms, of the Roman perſecutions [80].

A. D. 257. His baniſhment.

When Valerian was conſul for the third, and Gallienus for the fourth, time; Paternus, proconſul of Africa, ſummoned Cyprian to appear in his private council-chamber. He there acquainted him with the Imperial mandate which he had juſt received [81], that thoſe who had abandoned the Roman religion, ſhould immediately return to the practice of the ceremonies of their anceſtors. Cyprian replied without heſitation, that he was a Chriſtian and a biſhop, devoted to the worſhip of the true and only Deity, to whom he offered up his daily ſupplications for the ſafety and proſperity of the two emperors, his lawful ſovereigns. With modeſt confidence he pleaded the privilege of a citizen, in refuſing to give any anſwer to ſome invidious and indeed illegal queſtions which the proconſul had propoſed. A ſentence of baniſhment was pronounced as the penalty of Cyprian's diſobedience; and he was conducted without delay to Curubis, a free and maritime city of Zeugitania, in a pleaſant ſituation, a fertile territory, and at the diſtance of about forty miles from Carthage [82].

[80] We have an original life of Cyprian by the deacon Pontius, the companion of his exile, and the ſpectator of his death; and we likewiſe poſſeſs the ancient proconſular acts of his martyrdom. Theſe two relations are conſiſtent with each other, and with probability; and what is ſomewhat remarkable, they are both unſullied by any miraculous circumſtances.

[81] It ſhould ſeem that theſe were circular orders, ſent at the ſame time to all the governors. Dionyſius (ap. Euſeb. l. vii. c. 11.) relates the hiſtory of his own baniſhment from Alexandria, almoſt in the ſame manner. But as he eſcaped and ſurvived the perſecution, we muſt account him either more or leſs fortunate than Cyprian.

[82] See Plin. Hiſt. Natur. v. 3. Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. part iii. p. 96. Shaw's Travels, p. 90.; and for the adjacent country (which is terminated by Cape Bona, or the promontory of Mercury), l'Afrique de Marmol. tom. ii. p. 494. There are the remains of an aqueduct, near Curubis, or Curbis, at preſent altered into Gurbes; and Dr. Shaw read an inſcription, which ſtyles that city, *Colonia Fulvia*. The deacon Pontius (in Vit. Cyprian. c. 12.) calls it "Apricum et competentem locum, hoſpitium pro voluntate ſecretum, et quicquid apponi eis ante promiſſum eſt, qui regnum et juſtitiam Dei quærunt."

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The exiled biſhop enjoyed the conveniencies of life and the conſciouſneſs of virtue. His reputation was diffuſed over Africa and Italy; an account of his behaviour was publiſhed for the edification of the Chriſtian world [83]; and his ſolitude was frequently interrupted by the letters, the viſits, and the congratulations of the faithful. On the arrival of a new proconſul in the province, the fortune of Cyprian appeared for ſome time to wear a ſtill more favourable aſpect. He was recalled from baniſhment; and though not yet permitted to return to Carthage, his own gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital were aſſigned for the place of his reſidence [84].

His condemnation.

At length, exactly one year [85] after Cyprian was firſt apprehended, Galerius Maximus, proconſul of Africa, received the Imperial warrant for the execution of the Chriſtian teachers. The biſhop of Carthage was ſenſible that he ſhould be ſingled out for one of the firſt victims; and the frailty of nature tempted him to withdraw himſelf by a ſecret flight, from the danger and the honour of martyrdom: but ſoon recovering that fortitude which his character required, he returned to his gardens, and patiently expected the miniſters of death. Two officers of rank, who were intruſted with that commiſſion, placed Cyprian between them in a chariot, and as the proconſul was not then at leiſure, they conducted him, not to a priſon, but to a private houſe in Carthage, which belonged to one of them. An elegant ſupper was provided for the entertainment of the biſhop, and his Chriſtian friends were permitted for the laſt time to enjoy his ſociety, whilſt the ſtreets were filled with a multitude of the faithful, anxious and alarmed at the approaching fate of

[83] See Cyprian. Epiſtol. 77. Edit. Fell.

[84] Upon his converſion, he had ſold thoſe gardens for the benefit of the poor. The indulgence of God (moſt probably the liberality of ſome Chriſtian friend) reſtored them to Cyprian. See Pontius, c. 15.

[85] When Cyprian, a twelvemonth before, was ſent into exile, he dreamt that he ſhould be put to death the next day. The event made it neceſſary to explain that word, as ſignifying a year. Pontius, c. 12.

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their ſpiritual father [86]. In the morning he appeared before the tribunal of the proconſul, who, after informing himſelf of the name and ſituation of Cyprian, commanded him to offer ſacrifice, and preſſed him to reflect on the conſequences of his diſobedience. The refuſal of Cyprian was firm and deciſive; and the magiſtrate, when he had taken the opinion of his council, pronounced with ſome reluctance the ſentence of death. It was conceived in the following terms: "That Thaſcius Cyprianus ſhould be immediately beheaded, "as the enemy of the gods of Rome, and as the chief and ring-"leader of a criminal aſſociation, which he had ſeduced into an "impious reſiſtance againſt the laws of the moſt holy emperors, "Valerian and Gallienus [87]." The manner of his execution was the mildeſt and leaſt painful that could be inflicted on a perſon convicted of any capital offence: nor was the uſe of torture admitted to obtain from the biſhop of Carthage either the recantation of his principles, or the diſcovery of his accomplices.

His martyrdom.

As ſoon as the ſentence was proclaimed, a general cry of "We "will die with him," aroſe at once among the liſtening multitude of Chriſtians who waited before the palace gates. The generous effuſions of their zeal and affection were neither ſerviceable to Cyprian nor dangerous to themſelves. He was led away under a guard of tribunes and centurions, without reſiſtance and without inſult, to the place of his execution, a ſpacious and level plain near the city, which was already filled with great numbers of ſpectators. His faithful preſbyters and deacons were permitted to accompany their holy biſhop. They aſſiſted him in laying aſide his upper garment, ſpread linen on the ground to catch the precious relics

[86] Pontius (c. 15.) acknowledges that Cyprian, with whom he ſupped, paſſed the night cuſtodiâ delicatâ. The biſhop exerciſed a laſt and very proper act of juriſdiction, by directing that the younger females, who watched in the ſtreet, ſhould be removed from the dangers and temptations of a nocturnal crowd. Act. Proconſularia, c. 2.

[87] See the original ſentence in the Acts, c. 4. and in Pontius, c. 17. The latter expreſſes it in a more rhetorical manner.

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of his blood, and received his orders to beſtow five-and-twenty pieces of gold on the executioner. The martyr then covered his face with his hands, and at one blow his head was ſeparated from his body. His corpſe remained during ſome hours expoſed to the curioſity of the Gentiles: but in the night it was removed, and tranſported in a triumphal proceſſion and with a ſplendid illumination to the burial-place of the Chriſtians. The funeral of Cyprian was publicly celebrated without receiving any interruption from the Roman magiſtrates; and thoſe among the faithful who had performed the laſt offices to his perſon and his memory, were ſecure from the danger of inquiry or of puniſhment. It is remarkable, that of ſo great a multitude of biſhops in the province of Africa, Cyprian was the firſt who was eſteemed worthy to obtain the crown of martyrdom [88].

Various incitements to martyrdom.

It was in the choice of Cyprian either to die a martyr or to live an apoſtate: but on that choice depended the alternative of honour or infamy. Could we ſuppoſe that the biſhop of Carthage had employed the profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith only as the inſtrument of his avarice or ambition, it was ſtill incumbent on him to ſupport the character which he had aſſumed [89]; and, if he poſſeſſed the ſmalleſt degree of manly fortitude, rather to expoſe himſelf to the moſt cruel tortures, than by a ſingle act to exchange the reputation of a whole life, for the abhorrence of his Chriſtian brethren and the contempt of the Gentile world. But if the zeal of Cyprian was ſupported by the ſincere conviction of the truth of thoſe doctrines which he preached, the crown of martyrdom muſt have appeared to him as an object of deſire rather than of terror. It is not eaſy to extract any diſtinct ideas from the vague though eloquent declama-

[88] Pontius, c. 19. M. de Tillemont (Memoires, tom. iv. part i. p. 450. note 50) is not pleaſed with ſo poſitive an excluſion of any former martyrs of the epiſcopal rank.

[89] Whatever opinion we may entertain of the character or principles of Thomas Becket, we muſt acknowledge that he ſuffered death with a conſtancy not unworthy of the primitive martyrs. See Lord Lyttelton's Hiſtory of Henry II. vol. ii. p. 592, &c.

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tions of the Fathers, or to aſcertain the degree of immortal glory and happineſs which they confidently promiſed to thoſe who were ſo fortunate as to ſhed their blood in the cauſe of religion [90]. They inculcated with becoming diligence, that the fire of martyrdom ſupplied every defect and expiated every ſin; that while the ſouls of ordinary Chriſtians were obliged to paſs through a ſlow and painful purification, the triumphant ſufferers entered into the immediate fruition of eternal bliſs, where, in the ſociety of the patriarchs, the apoſtles, and the prophets, they reigned with Chriſt, and acted as his aſſeſſors in the univerſal judgment of mankind. The aſſurance of a laſting reputation upon earth, a motive ſo congenial to the vanity of human nature, often ſerved to animate the courage of the martyrs. The honours which Rome or Athens beſtowed on thoſe citizens who had fallen in the cauſe of their country, were cold and unmeaning demonſtrations of reſpect, when compared with the ardent gratitude and devotion which the primitive church expreſſed towards the victorious champions of the faith. The annual commemoration of their virtues and ſufferings was obſerved as a ſacred ceremony, and at length terminated in religious worſhip. Among the Chriſtians who had publicly confeſſed their religious principles, thoſe, who (as it very frequently happened) had been diſmiſſed from the tribunal or the priſons of the Pagan magiſtrates, obtained ſuch honours as were juſtly due to their imperfect martyrdom and their generous reſolution. The moſt pious females courted the permiſſion of imprinting kiſſes on the fetters which they had worn, and on the wounds which they had received. Their perſons were eſteemed holy, their deciſions were admitted with deference, and they too often abuſed, by their ſpiritual pride and licentious manners, the

[90] See in particular the treatiſe of Cyprian de Lapſis, p. 87—98. Edit. Fell. The learning of Dodwell (Diſſertat. Cyprianic. xii. xiii.), and the ingenuity of Middleton (Free Enquiry, p. 162, &c.), have left ſcarcely any thing to add concerning the merit, the honours, and the motives of the martyrs.

pre-eminence

pre-eminence which their zeal and intrepidity had acquired [91]. Distinctions like theſe, whilſt they diſplay the exalted merit, betray the inconſiderable number of thoſe who ſuffered, and of thoſe who died for the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

Ardour of the firſt Chriſtians.

The ſober diſcretion of the preſent age will more readily cenſure than admire, but can more eaſily admire than imitate, the fervour of the firſt Chriſtians, who, according to the lively expreſſion of Sulpicius Severus, deſired martyrdom with more eagerneſs than his own contemporaries ſolicited a biſhopric [92]. The epiſtles which Ignatius compoſed as he was carried in chains through the cities of Aſia, breathe ſentiments the moſt repugnant to the ordinary feelings of human nature. He earneſtly beſeeches the Romans, that when he ſhould be expoſed in the amphitheatre, they would not, by their kind but unſeaſonable interceſſion, deprive him of the crown of glory; and he declares his reſolution to provoke and irritate the wild beaſts which might be employed as the inſtruments of his death [93]. Some ſtories are related of the courage of martyrs, who actually performed what Ignatius had intended; who exaſperated the fury of the lions, preſſed the executioner to haſten his office, cheerfully leaped into the fires which were kindled to conſume them, and diſcovered a ſenſation of joy and pleaſure in the midſt of the moſt exquiſite tortures. Several examples have been preſerved of a zeal impatient of thoſe reſtraints which the emperors had provided for the ſecurity of the church. The Chriſtians ſometimes ſupplied by their voluntary declaration the want of an accuſer, rudely diſ-

[91] Cyprian. Epiſtol. 5, 6, 7. 22. 24. and de Unitat. Eccleſiæ. The number of pretended martyrs has been very much multiplied, by the cuſtom which was introduced of beſtowing that honourable name on confeſſors.

[92] Certatim glorioſa in certamina ruebatur; multique avidius tum martyria glorioſis mortibus quærebantur, quam nunc Epiſcopatus pravis ambionibus appetuntur. Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. He might have omitted the word *nunc*.

[93] See Epiſt. ad Roman. c. 4, 5. ap. Patres Apoſtol. tom. ii. p. 27. It ſuited the purpoſe of Biſhop Pearſon (ſee Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part ii. c. 9.) to juſtify by a profuſion of examples and authorities, the ſentiments of Ignatius.

turbed

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turbed the public ſervice of Paganiſm [94], and ruſhing in crowds round the tribunal of the magiſtrates, called upon them to pronounce and to inflict the ſentence of the law. The behaviour of the Chriſtians was too remarkable to eſcape the notice of the ancient philoſophers; but they ſeem to have conſidered it with much leſs admiration than aſtoniſhment. Incapable of conceiving the motives which ſometimes tranſported the fortitude of believers beyond the bounds of prudence or reaſon, they treated ſuch an eagerneſs to die as the ſtrange reſult of obſtinate deſpair, of ſtupid inſenſibility, or of ſuperſtitious phrenzy [95]. "Unhappy men," exclaimed the proconſul Antoninus to the Chriſtians of Aſia, "unhappy men, if you are thus weary of "your lives, is it ſo difficult for you to find ropes and precipices [96]?" He was extremely cautious (as it is obſerved by a learned and pious hiſtorian) of puniſhing men who had found no accuſers but themſelves, the Imperial laws not having made any proviſion for ſo unexpected a caſe: condemning therefore a few, as a warning to their brethren, he diſmiſſed the multitude with indignation and contempt [97]. Notwithſtanding this real or affected diſdain, the intrepid conſtancy of the faithful was productive of more ſalutary effects on thoſe minds which nature or grace had diſpoſed for the eaſy reception of religious truth. On theſe melancholy occaſions, there were many among the Gentiles who pitied, who admired, and who were converted. The generous enthuſiaſm was communicated from the

[94] The ſtory of Polyeuctes, on which Corneille has founded a very beautiful tragedy, is one of the moſt celebrated, though not perhaps the moſt authentic, inſtances of this exceſſive zeal. We ſhould obſerve, that the 60th canon of the council of Illiberis refuſes the title of martyrs to thoſe who expoſed themſelves to death, by publicly deſtroying the idols.

[95] See Epictetus, l. iv. c. 7. (though there is ſome doubt whether he alludes to the Chriſtians) Marcus Antoninus de Rebus ſuis, l. xi. c. 3. Lucian in Peregrin.

[96] Tertullian ad Scapul. c. 5. The learned are divided between three perſons of the ſame name, who were all proconſuls of Aſia. I am inclined to aſcribe this ſtory to Antoninus Pius, who was afterwards emperor; and who may have governed Aſia, under the reign of Trajan.

[97] Moſheim, de Rebus Chriſt. ante Conſtantin. p. 235.

ſufferer

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ſufferer to the ſpectators; and the blood of martyrs, according to a well-known obſervation, became the ſeed of the church.

Gradual relaxation.

But although devotion had raiſed, and eloquence continued to inflame, this fever of the mind, it inſenſibly gave way to the more natural hopes and fears of the human heart, to the love of life, the apprehenſion of pain, and the horror of diſſolution. The more prudent rulers of the Church found themſelves obliged to reſtrain the indiſcreet ardour of their followers, and to diſtruſt a conſtancy which too often abandoned them in the hour of trial [98]. As the lives of the faithful became leſs mortified and auſtere, they were every day leſs ambitious of the honours of martyrdom; and the ſoldiers of Chriſt, inſtead of diſtinguiſhing themſelves by voluntary deeds of heroiſm, frequently deſerted their poſt, and fled in confuſion before the enemy whom it was their duty to reſiſt. There were three methods, however, of eſcaping the flames of perſecution, which were not attended with an equal degree of guilt: the firſt indeed was generally allowed to be innocent; the ſecond was of a doubtful, or at leaſt of a venial, nature; but the third implied a direct and criminal apoſtacy from the Chriſtian faith.

Three methods of eſcaping martyrdom.

I. A modern inquiſitor would hear with ſurpriſe, that whenever an information was given to a Roman magiſtrate of any perſon within his juriſdiction who had embraced the ſect of the Chriſtians, the charge was communicated to the party accuſed, and that a convenient time was allowed him to ſettle his domeſtic concerns, and to prepare an anſwer to the crime which was imputed to him [99]. If he entertained any doubt of his own conſtancy, ſuch a delay afforded him the opportunity of preſerving his life and honour by flight, of withdrawing himſelf into ſome obſcure retirement or ſome

[98] See the Epiſtle of the Church of Smyrna, ap. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iv. c. 15.

[99] In the ſecond apology of Juſtin, there is a particular and very curious inſtance of this legal delay. The ſame indulgence was granted to accuſed Chriſtians, in the perſecution of Decius; and Cyprian (de Lapſis) expreſsly mentions the "Dies negantibus præſtitutus."

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diſtant province, and of patiently expecting the return of peace and ſecurity. A meaſure ſo conſonant to reaſon was ſoon authorized by the advice and example of the moſt holy prelates; and ſeems to have been cenſured by few, except by the Montaniſts, who deviated into hereſy by their ſtrict and obſtinate adherence to the rigour of ancient diſcipline [100]. II. The provincial governors, whoſe zeal was leſs prevalent than their avarice, had countenanced the practice of ſelling certificates (or libels as they were called), which atteſted, that the perſons therein mentioned had complied with the laws, and ſacrificed to the Roman deities. By producing theſe falſe declarations, the opulent and timid Chriſtians were enabled to ſilence the malice of an informer, and to reconcile in ſome meaſure their ſafety with their religion. A ſlight pennance atoned for this profane diſſimulation [101]. III. In every perſecution there were great numbers of unworthy Chriſtians, who publicly diſowned or renounced the faith which they had profeſſed; and who confirmed the ſincerity of their abjuration, by the legal acts of burning incenſe or of offering ſacrifices. Some of theſe apoſtates had yielded on the firſt menace or exhortation of the magiſtrate; whilſt the patience of others had been ſubdued by the length and repetition of tortures. The affrighted countenances of ſome betrayed their inward remorſe, while others advanced with confidence and alacrity to the altars of the gods [102]. But the diſguiſe, which fear had impoſed, ſubſiſted no longer than the preſent danger. As ſoon as the

[100] Tertullian conſiders flight from perſecution, as an imperfect, but very criminal, apoſtacy, as an impious attempt to elude the will of God, &c. &c. He has written a treatiſe on this ſubject (ſee p. 536—544. Edit. Rigalt.), which is filled with the wildeſt fanaticiſm, and the moſt incoherent declamation. It is, however, ſomewhat remarkable, that Tertullian did not ſuffer martyrdom himſelf.

[101] The *Libellatici*, who are chiefly known by the writings of Cyprian, are deſcribed with the utmoſt preciſion, in the copious commentary of Moſheim, p. 483—489.

[102] Plin. Epiſtol. x. 97. Dionyſius Alexandrin. ap. Euſeb. l. vi. c. 41. Ad prima ſtatim verba minantis inimici maximus fratrum numerus fidem ſuam prodidit: nec proſtratus eſt perſecutionis impetu, ſed voluntario lapſu ſeipſum proſtravit. Cyprian. Opera, p. 89. Among theſe deſerters were many prieſts, and even biſhops.

ſeverity

ſeverity of the perſecution was abated, the doors of the churches were aſſailed by the returning multitude of penitents, who deteſted their idolatrous ſubmiſſion, and who ſolicited with equal ardour, but with various ſucceſs, their re-admiſſion into the ſociety of Chriſtians[103].

Alternatives of ſeverity and toleration.

IV. Notwithſtanding the general rules, eſtabliſhed for the conviction and puniſhment of the Chriſtians, the fate of thoſe ſectaries, in an extenſive and arbitrary government, muſt ſtill, in a great meaſure, have depended on their own behaviour, the circumſtances of the times, and the temper of their ſupreme as well as ſubordinate rulers. Zeal might ſometimes provoke, and prudence might ſometimes avert or aſſuage, the ſuperſtitious fury of the Pagans. A variety of motives might diſpoſe the provincial governors either to enforce or to relax the execution of the laws; and of theſe motives, the moſt forcible was their regard not only for the public edicts, but for the ſecret intentions of the emperor, a glance from whoſe eye was ſufficient to kindle or to extinguiſh the flames of perſecution. As often as any occaſional ſeverities were exerciſed in the different parts of the empire, the primitive Chriſtians lamented and perhaps magnified their own ſufferings; but the celebrated number of *ten* perſecutions has been determined by the eccleſiaſtical writers of the fifth century, who poſſeſſed a more diſtinct view of the proſperous or adverſe fortunes of the church, from the age of Nero to that of Diocletian. The ingenious parallels of the *ten* plagues of Egypt, and of the *ten* horns of the Apocalypſe, firſt ſuggeſted this calculation to their minds; and in their application of the faith of prophecy to the truth of hiſtory, they were careful to ſelect thoſe reigns which were indeed the moſt hoſtile to the Chriſtian cauſe[104].

The ten perſecutions.

[103] It was on this occaſion that Cyprian wrote his treatiſe De Lapſis, and many of his epiſtles. The controverſy concerning the treatment of penitent apoſtates, does not occur among the Chriſtians of the preceding century. Shall we aſcribe this to the ſuperiority of their faith and courage, or to our leſs intimate knowledge of their hiſtory?

[104] See Moſheim, p. 97. Sulpicius Severus was the firſt author of this computation; though he ſeemed deſirous of reſerving the tenth and greateſt perſecution for the coming of the Antichriſt.

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But theſe tranſient perſecutions ſerved only to revive the zeal, and to reſtore the diſcipline of the faithful: and the moments of extraordinary rigour were compenſated by much longer intervals of peace and ſecurity. The indifference of ſome princes, and the indulgence of others, permitted the Chriſtians to enjoy, though not perhaps a legal, yet an actual and public, toleration of their religion.

Suppoſed edicts of Tiberius and Marcus Antoninus.

The apology of Tertullian contains two very ancient, very ſingular, but at the ſame time very ſuſpicious inſtances of Imperial clemency; the edicts publiſhed by Tiberius, and by Marcus Antoninus, and deſigned not only to protect the innocence of the Chriſtians, but even to proclaim thoſe ſtupendous miracles which had atteſted the truth of their doctrine. The firſt of theſe examples is attended with ſome difficulties which might perplex a ſceptical mind [105]. We are required to believe, *that* Pontius Pilate informed the emperor of the unjuſt ſentence of death which he had pronounced againſt an innocent, and, as it appeared, a divine, perſon; and that, without acquiring the merit, he expoſed himſelf to the danger, of martyrdom; *that* Tiberius, who avowed his contempt for all religion, immediately conceived the deſign of placing the Jewiſh Meſſiah among the gods of Rome; *that* his ſervile ſenate ventured to diſobey the commands of their maſter; *that* Tiberius, inſtead of reſenting their refuſal, contented himſelf with protecting the Chriſtians from the ſeverity of the laws, many years before ſuch laws were enacted, or before the church had aſſumed any diſtinct name or exiſtence; and laſtly, *that* the memory of this extraordinary tranſaction was preſerved in the moſt public and authentic records, which eſcaped the knowledge of the hiſtorians of Greece and Rome, and were only viſible to the eyes of an African Chriſtian, who com-

[105] The teſtimony given by Pontius Pilate is firſt mentioned by Juſtin. The ſucceſſive improvements which the ſtory has acquired (as it paſſed through the hands of Tertullian, Euſebius, Epiphanius, Chryſoſtom, Oroſius, Gregory of Tours, and the authors of the ſeveral editions of the acts of Pilate), are very fairly ſtated by Dom Calmet, Diſſertat. ſur l'Ecriture, tom. iii. p. 651, &c.

poſed

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poſed his apology one hundred and ſixty years after the death of Tiberius. The edict of Marcus Antoninus is ſuppoſed to have been the effect of his devotion and gratitude, for the miraculous deliverance which he had obtained in the Marcomannic war. The diſtreſs of the legions, the ſeaſonable tempeſt of rain and hail, of thunder and of lightning, and the diſmay and defeat of the barbarians, have been celebrated by the eloquence of ſeveral Pagan writers. If there were any Chriſtians in that army, it was natural that they ſhould aſcribe ſome merit to the fervent prayers, which, in the moment of danger, they had offered up for their own and the public ſafety. But we are ſtill aſſured by monuments of braſs and marble, by the Imperial medals, and by the Antonine column, that neither the prince nor the people entertained any ſenſe of this ſignal obligation, ſince they unanimouſly attribute their deliverance to the providence of Jupiter, and to the interpoſition of Mercury. During the whole courſe of his reign, Marcus deſpiſed the Chriſtians as a philoſopher, and puniſhed them as a ſovereign [106].

State of the Chriſtians in the reigns of Commodus and Severus. A. D. 180.

By a ſingular fatality, the hardſhips which they had endured under the government of a virtuous prince, immediately ceaſed on the acceſſion of a tyrant, and as none except themſelves had experienced the injuſtice of Marcus, ſo they alone were protected by the lenity of Commodus. The celebrated Marcia, the moſt favoured of his concubines, and who at length contrived the murder of her Imperial lover, entertained a ſingular affection for the oppreſſed church; and though it was impoſſible that ſhe could reconcile the practice of vice with the precepts of the Goſpel, ſhe might hope to atone for the frailties of her ſex and profeſſion, by declaring herſelf the patroneſs of the Chriſtians [107]. Under the gracious protection

[106] On this miracle, as it is commonly called, of the thundering legion, ſee the admirable criticiſm of Mr. Moyle, in his Works, vol. ii. p. 81—390.

[107] Dion Caſſius, or rather his abbreviator Xiphilin, l. lxxii. p. 1206. Mr. Moyle (p. 266.) has explained the condition of the church under the reign of Commodus.

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of Marcia, they paſſed in ſafety the thirteen years of a cruel tyranny; and when the empire was eſtabliſhed in the houſe of Severus, they formed a domeſtic but more honourable connexion with the new court. The emperor was perſuaded, that, in a dangerous ſickneſs, he had derived ſome benefit, either ſpiritual or phyſical, from the holy oil, with which one of his ſlaves had anointed him. He always treated with peculiar diſtinction ſeveral perſons of both ſexes who had embraced the new religion. The nurſe as well as the preceptor of Caracalla were Chriſtians; and if that young prince ever betrayed a ſentiment of humanity, it was occaſioned by an incident, which, however trifling, bore ſome relation to the cauſe of Chriſtianity[108]. Under the reign of Severus, the fury of the populace was checked; the rigour of ancient laws was for ſome time ſuſpended; and the provincial governors were ſatisfied with receiving an annual preſent from the churches within their juriſdiction, as the price, or as the reward, of their moderation[109]. The controverſy concerning the preciſe time of the celebration of Eaſter armed the biſhops of Aſia and Italy againſt each other, and was conſidered as the moſt important buſineſs of this period of leiſure and tranquillity[110]. Nor was the peace of the church interrupted, till the increaſing numbers of proſelytes ſeem at length to have attracted the attention, and to have alienated the mind, of Severus. With the deſign of reſtraining the progreſs of Chriſtianity, he publiſhed an edict, which, though it was deſigned to affect only the new converts, could not be carried into ſtrict execution, without expoſing to danger and puniſhment the moſt zealous of their teachers and miſſionaries. In

A. D. 198.

[108] Compare the life of Caracalla in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, with the epiſtle of Tertullian to Scapula. Dr. Jortin (Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. ii. p. 5, &c.) conſiders the cure of Severus, by the means of holy oil, with a ſtrong deſire to convert it into a miracle.

[109] Tertullian de Fugâ, c. 13. The preſent was made during the feaſt of the Saturnalia; and it is a matter of ſerious concern to Tertullian, that the faithful ſhould be confounded with the moſt infamous profeſſions which purchaſed the connivance of the government.

[110] Euſeb. l. v. c. 23, 24. Moſheim, p. 435—447.

this

this mitigated perſecution, we may ſtill diſcover the indulgent ſpirit of Rome and of Polytheiſm, which ſo readily admitted every excuſe in favour of thoſe who practiſed the religious ceremonies of their fathers[111].

Of the ſucceſſors of Severus. A. D. 211—249.

But the laws which Severus had enacted, ſoon expired with the authority of that emperor; and the Chriſtians, after this accidental tempeſt, enjoyed a calm of thirty-eight years[112]. Till this period they had uſually held their aſſemblies in private houſes and ſequeſtered places. They were now permitted to erect and conſecrate convenient edifices for the purpoſe of religious worſhip[113]; to purchaſe lands, even at Rome itſelf, for the uſe of the community; and to conduct the elections of their eccleſiaſtical miniſters in ſo public, but at the ſame time in ſo exemplary, a manner, as to deſerve the reſpectful attention of the Gentiles[114]. This long repoſe of the church was accompanied with dignity. The reigns of thoſe princes who derived their extraction from the Aſiatic provinces, proved the moſt favourable to the Chriſtians; the eminent perſons of the ſect, inſtead of being reduced to implore the protection of a ſlave or concubine, were admitted into the palace in the honourable characters of prieſts and philoſophers; and their myſterious doctrines, which were already diffuſed among the people, inſenſibly attracted the curioſity of their ſovereign. When the empreſs Mammæa paſſed through Antioch, ſhe expreſſed a deſire of converſing with the celebrated Origen, the fame of whoſe piety and

[111] Judæos fieri ſub gravi pœna vetuit. Idem etiam de Chriſtianis ſanxit. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 70

[112] Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. p. 384. This computation (allowing for a ſingle exception) is confirmed by the hiſtory of Euſebius, and by the writings of Cyprian.

[113] The antiquity of Chriſtian churches is diſcuſſed by Tillemont (Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. iii. part ii. p. 68—72.), and by Mr. Moyle (vol. i. p. 378—398). The former refers the firſt conſtruction of them to the peace of Alexander Severus; the latter, to the peace of Gallienus.

[114] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 130. The emperor Alexander adopted their method of publicly propoſing the names of thoſe perſons who were candidates for ordination. It is true, that the honour of this practice is likewiſe attributed to the Jews.

learning

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learning was ſpread over the Eaſt. Origen obeyed ſo flattering an invitation, and though he could not expect to ſucceed in the converſion of an artful and ambitious woman, ſhe liſtened with pleaſure to his eloquent exhortations, and honourably diſmiſſed him to his retirement in Paleſtine [115]. The ſentiments of Mammæa were adopted by her ſon Alexander, and the philoſophic devotion of that emperor was marked by a ſingular but injudicious regard for the Chriſtian religion. In his domeſtic chapel he placed the ſtatues of Abraham, of Orpheus, of Apollonius, and of Chriſt, as an honour juſtly due to thoſe reſpectable ſages who had inſtructed mankind in the various modes of addreſſing their homage to the ſupreme and univerſal deity [116]. A purer faith, as well as worſhip, was openly profeſſed and practiſed among his houſehold. Biſhops, perhaps for the firſt time, were ſeen at court; and, after the death of Alexander, when
A. D. 235. the inhuman Maximin diſcharged his fury on the favourites and ſervants of his unfortunate benefactor, a great number of Chriſtians, of every rank, and of both ſexes, were involved in the promiſcuous maſſacre, which, on their account, has improperly received the name of Perſecution [117].

Of Maximin, Philip, and Decius.

Notwithſtanding the cruel diſpoſition of Maximin, the effects of his reſentment againſt the Chriſtians were of a very local and tem-

[115] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vi. c. 21. Hieronym. de Script. Eccleſ. c. 54. Mammæa was ſtyled a holy aud pious woman, both by the Chriſtians and the Pagans. From the former, therefore, it was impoſſible that ſhe ſhould deſerve that honourable epithet.

[116] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 123. Moſheim (p. 465.) ſeems to refine too much on the domeſtic religion of Alexander. His deſign of building a public temple to Chriſt (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 129.), and the objection which was ſuggeſted either to him, or in ſimilar circumſtances to Hadrian, appear to have no other foundation than an improbable report, invented by the Chriſtians, and credulouſly adopted by an hiſtorian of the age of Conſtantine.

[117] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 28. It may be preſumed, that the ſucceſs of the Chriſtians had exaſperated the increaſing bigotry of the Pagans. Dion Caſſius, who compoſed his hiſtory under the former reign, had moſt probably intended for the uſe of his maſter thoſe counſels of perſecution, which he aſcribes to a better age, and to the favourite of Auguſtus. Concerning this oration of Mæcenas, or rather of Dion, I may refer to my own unbiaſſed opinion (p. 41. Not. 25.), and to the Abbé de la Bleterie (Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxiv. p. 303. tom. xxv. p. 432).

porary

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porary nature, and the pious Origen, who had been proſcribed as a devoted victim, was ſtill reſerved to convey the truths of the Goſpel to the ear of monarchs [118]. He addreſſed ſeveral edifying letters to the emperor Philip, to his wife, and to his mother; and as ſoon as that prince, who was born in the neighbourhood of Paleſtine, had uſurped the Imperial ſceptre, the Chriſtians acquired a friend and a protector. The public and even partial favour of Philip towards the ſectaries of the new religion, and his conſtant reverence for the miniſters of the church, gave ſome colour to the ſuſpicion, which prevailed in his own times, that the emperor himſelf was become a convert to the faith [119]; and afforded ſome grounds for a fable which was afterwards invented, that he had been purified by confeſſion and pennance from the guilt contracted by the murder of his innocent predeceſſor [120]. The fall of Philip introduced, with the change of maſters, a new ſyſtem of government, ſo oppreſſive to the Chriſtians, that their former condition, ever ſince the time of Domitian, was repreſented as a ſtate of perfect freedom and ſecurity, if compared with the rigorous treatment which they experienced under the ſhort reign of Decius [121]. The virtues of that prince will ſcarcely allow us to ſuſpect that he was actuated by a mean reſentment againſt the favourites of his pre-

A. D. 244.

A. D. 249.

[118] Oroſius, l. vii. c. 19. mentions Origen as the object of Maximin's reſentment; and Firmilianus, a Cappadocian biſhop of that age, gives a juſt and confined idea of this perſecution (apud Cyprian. Epiſt. 75.).

[119] The mention of thoſe princes who were publicly ſuppoſed to be Chriſtians, as we find it in an epiſtle of Dionyſius of Alexandria (ap. Euſeb. l. vii. c. 10.), evidently alludes to Philip and his family; and forms a contemporary evidence, that ſuch a report had prevailed; but the Egyptian biſhop, who lived at an humble diſtance from the court of Rome, expreſſes himſelf with a becoming diffidence concerning the truth of the fact. The epiſtles of Origen (which were extant in the time of Euſebius, ſee l. vi. c. 36.) would moſt probably decide this curious, rather than important, queſtion.

[120] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 34. The ſtory, as is uſual, has been embelliſhed by ſucceeding writers, and is confuted, with much ſuperfluous learning, by Frederick Spanheim (Opera Varia, tom. ii. p. 400, &c.).

[121] Lactantius, de Mortibus Perſecutorum, c. 3, 4. After celebrating the felicity and increaſe of the church, under a long ſucceſſion of good princes; he adds, "Extitit poſt annos plurimos, execrabile animal, Decius, qui vexaret Eccleſiam."

deceſſor,

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deceſſor, and it is more reaſonable to believe, that in the proſecution of his general deſign to reſtore the purity of Roman manners, he was deſirous of delivering the empire from what he condemned as a recent and criminal ſuperſtition. The biſhops of the moſt conſiderable cities were removed by exile or death: the vigilance of the magiſtrates prevented the clergy of Rome during ſixteen months from proceeding to a new election; and it was the opinion of the Chriſtians, that the emperor would more patiently endure a competitor for the purple, than a biſhop in the capital[122]. Were it poſſible to ſuppoſe that the penetration of Decius had diſcovered pride under the diſguiſe of humility, or that he could foreſee the temporal dominion which might inſenſibly ariſe from the claims of ſpiritual authority, we might be leſs ſurpriſed, that he ſhould conſider the ſucceſſors of St. Peter as the moſt formidable rivals to thoſe of Auguſtus.

Of Valerian, Gallienus, and his ſucceſſors. A. D. 253—260.

The adminiſtration of Valerian was diſtinguiſhed by a levity and inconſtancy, ill-ſuited to the gravity of the *Roman Cenſor*. In the firſt part of his reign, he ſurpaſſed in clemency thoſe princes who had been ſuſpected of an attachment to the Chriſtian faith. In the laſt three years and a half, liſtening to the inſinuations of a miniſter addicted to the ſuperſtitions of Egypt, he adopted the maxims, and imitated the ſeverity, of his predeceſſor Decius[123]. The acceſſion of Gallienus, which increaſed the calamities of the empire, reſtored peace to the church; and the Chriſtians obtained the free exerciſe of their religion, by an edict addreſſed to the biſhops, and conceived in ſuch terms as ſeemed to acknowledge their office and public character[124]. The ancient laws, without being formally repealed, were

[122] Euſeb. l. vi. c. 39. Cyprian. Epiſtol. 55. The ſee of Rome remained vacant from the martyrdom of Fabianus, to the 20th of January, A. D. 250, till the election of Cornelius, the 4th of June, A. D. 251. Decius had probably left Rome, ſince he was killed before the end of that year.

[123] Euſeb. l. vii. c. 10. Moſheim (p. 548.) has very clearly ſhewn, that the Præfect Macrianus, and the Egyptian *Magus*, are one and the ſame perſon.

[124] Euſebius (l. vii. c. 13.) gives us a Greek verſion of this Latin edict, which ſeems to have been very conciſe. By another edict, he directed, that the *Cæmeteria* ſhould be reſtored to the Chriſtians.

ſuffered

ſuffered to ſink into oblivion; and (excepting only ſome hoſtile intentions which are attributed to the emperor Aurelian [125]) the diſciples of Chriſt paſſed above forty years in a ſtate of proſperity, far more dangerous to their virtue than the ſevereſt trials of perſecution.

Paul of Samoſata, his manners. A. D. 260.

The ſtory of Paul of Samoſata, who filled the metropolitan ſee of Antioch, while the Eaſt was in the hands of Odenathus and Zenobia, may ſerve to illuſtrate the condition and character of the times. The wealth of that prelate was a ſufficient evidence of his guilt, ſince it was neither derived from the inheritance of his fathers, nor acquired by the arts of honeſt induſtry. But Paul conſidered the ſervice of the church as a very lucrative profeſſion [126]. His eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction was venal and rapacious; he extorted frequent contributions from the moſt opulent of the faithful, and converted to his own uſe a conſiderable part of the public revenue. By his pride and luxury, the Chriſtian religion was rendered odious in the eyes of the Gentiles. His council chamber and his throne, the ſplendour with which he appeared in public, the ſuppliant crowd who ſolicited his attention, the multitude of letters and petitions to which he dictated his anſwers, and the perpetual hurry of buſineſs in which he was involved, were circumſtances much better ſuited to the ſtate of a civil magiſtrate [127], than to the humility of a primi-

[125] Euſeb. l. vii. c. 30. Lactantius de M. P. c. 6. Hieronym. in Chron. p. 177. Oroſius, l. vii. c. 23. Their language is in general ſo ambiguous and incorrect, that we are at a loſs to determine how far Aurelian had carried his intentions before he was aſſaſſinated. Moſt of the moderns (except Dodwell, Diſſertat. Cyprian. xi. 64.) have ſeized the occaſion of gaining a few extraordinary martyrs.

[126] Paul was better pleaſed with the title of *Ducenarius*, than with that of biſhop. The *Ducenarius* was an Imperial procurator, ſo called from his ſalary of two hundred *Seſtertia*, or 1,600l. a year. (See Salmaſius ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 124.) Some critics ſuppoſe, that the biſhop of Antioch had actually obtained ſuch an office from Zenobia, while others conſider it only as a figurative expreſſion of his pomp and inſolence.

[127] Simony was not unknown in thoſe times; and the clergy ſometimes bought what they intended to ſell. It appears that the biſhopric of Carthage was purchaſed by a wealthy matron, named Lucilla, for her ſervant Majorinus. The price was 400 *Folles*. (Monument. Antiq. ad calcem Optati, p. 263.) Every *Follis* contained 125 pieces of ſilver, and the whole ſum may be computed at about 2,400l.

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tive biſhop. When he harangued his people from the pulpit, Paul affected the figurative ſtyle and the theatrical geſtures of an Aſiatic ſophiſt, while the cathedral reſounded with the loudeſt and moſt extravagant acclamations in the praiſe of his divine eloquence. Againſt thoſe who reſiſted his power, or refuſed to flatter his vanity, the prelate of Antioch was arrogant, rigid, and inexorable; but he relaxed the diſcipline, and laviſhed the treaſures, of the church on his dependent clergy, who were permitted to imitate their maſter in the gratification of every ſenſual appetite. For Paul indulged himſelf very freely in the pleaſures of the table, and he had received into the epiſcopal palace two young and beautiful women, as the conſtant companions of his leiſure moments [128].

He is degraded from the ſee of Antioch. A. D. 270.

Notwithſtanding theſe ſcandalous vices, if Paul of Samoſata had preſerved the purity of the orthodox faith, his reign over the capital of Syria would have ended only with his life; and had a ſeaſonable perſecution intervened, an effort of courage might perhaps have placed him in the rank of ſaints and martyrs. Some nice and ſubtle errors, which he imprudently adopted and obſtinately maintained, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, excited the zeal and indignation of the eaſtern churches [129]. From Egypt to the Euxine ſea, the biſhops were in arms and in motion. Several councils were held, confutations were publiſhed, excommunications were pronounced, ambiguous explanations were by turns accepted and refuſed, treaties were concluded and violated, and at length Paul of Samoſata was degraded from his epiſcopal character, by the ſentence of ſeventy or eighty biſhops, who aſſembled for that purpoſe at Antioch, and who, without conſulting the rights of the clergy or people, appointed a ſucceſſor by their own authority. The manifeſt

[128] If we are deſirous of extenuating the vices of Paul, we muſt ſuſpect the aſſembled biſhops of the Eaſt of publiſhing the moſt malicious calumnies in circular epiſtles addreſſed to all the churches of the empire (ap. Euſeb. l vii. c. 30.).

[129] His hereſy (like thoſe of Noetus and Sabellius, in the ſame century) tended to confound the myſterious diſtinction of the divine perſons. See Moſheim, p. 702, &c.

irregularity

irregularity of this proceeding increaſed the numbers of the diſcontented faction; and as Paul, who was no ſtranger to the arts of courts, had inſinuated himſelf into the favour of Zenobia, he maintained above four years the poſſeſſion of the epiſcopal houſe and office. The victory of Aurelian changed the face of the Eaſt, and the two contending parties, who applied to each other the epithets of ſchiſm and hereſy, were either commanded or permitted to plead their cauſe before the tribunal of the conqueror. This public and very ſingular trial affords a convincing proof, that the exiſtence, the property, the privileges, and the internal policy, of the Chriſtians were acknowledged, if not by the laws, at leaſt by the magiſtrates of the empire. As a Pagan and as a ſoldier, it could ſcarcely be expected that Aurelian ſhould enter into the diſcuſſion, whether the ſentiments of Paul or thoſe of his adverſaries were moſt agreeable to the true ſtandard of the orthodox faith. His determination, however, was founded on the general principles of equity and reaſon. He conſidered the biſhops of Italy as the moſt impartial and reſpectable judges among the Chriſtians, and as ſoon as he was informed, that they had unanimouſly approved the ſentence of the council, he acquieſced in their opinion, and immediately gave orders that Paul ſhould be compelled to relinquiſh the temporal poſſeſſions belonging to an office, of which, in the judgment of his brethren, he had been regularly deprived. But while we applaud the juſtice, we ſhould not overlook the policy, of Aurelian; who was deſirous of reſtoring and cementing the dependance of the provinces on the capital, by every means which could bind the intereſt or prejudices of any part of his ſubjects [130].

The ſentence is executed by Aurelian. A. D. 274.

Amidſt the frequent revolutions of the empire, the Chriſtians ſtill flouriſhed in peace and proſperity; and notwithſtanding a cele-

Peace and proſperity of the church

[130] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. vii. c. 30. We are entirely indebted to him for the curious ſtory of Paul of Samoſata.

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under Diocletian. A. D. 284—303.

brated æra of martyrs has been deduced from the acceſſion of Diocletian [131], the new ſyſtem of policy, introduced and maintained by the wiſdom of that prince, continued, during more than eighteen years, to breathe the mildeſt and moſt liberal ſpirit of religious toleration. The mind of Diocletian himſelf was leſs adapted indeed to ſpeculative inquiries, than to the active labours of war and government. His prudence rendered him averſe to any great innovation, and though his temper was not very ſuſceptible of zeal or enthuſiaſm, he always maintained an habitual regard for the ancient deities of the empire. But the leiſure of the two empreſſes, of his wife Priſca, and of Valeria his daughter, permitted them to liſten with more attention and reſpect to the truths of Chriſtianity, which in every age has acknowledged its important obligations to female devotion [132]. The principal eunuchs, Lucian [133] and Dorotheus, Gorgonius and Andrew, who attended the perſon, poſſeſſed the favour, and governed the houſehold, of Diocletian, protected by their powerful influence the faith which they had embraced. Their example was imitated by many of the moſt conſiderable officers of the palace, who, in their reſpective ſtations, had the care of the Imperial ornaments, of the robes, of the furniture, of the jewels, and even of the private treaſury; and, though it might ſometimes be incumbent on them to accompany the emperor when he ſacrificed in the temple [134], they enjoyed, with their wives, their children, and their ſlaves, the free exerciſe of the Chriſtian religion. Diocletian

[131] The Æra of Martyrs, which is ſtill in uſe among the Copts and the Abyſſinians, muſt be reckoned from the 29th of Auguſt, A. D. 284; as the beginning of the Egyptian year was nineteen days earlier than the real acceſſion of Diocletian. See Diſſertation preliminaire à l'Art de verifier les Dates.

[132] The expreſſion of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 15.) "ſacrificio pollui coegit," implies their antecedent converſion to the faith; but does not ſeem to juſtify the aſſertion of Moſheim (p. 912.), that they had been privately baptized.

[133] M. de Tillemont (Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. v. part i. p. 11, 12.) has quoted from the Spicilegium of Dom. Luc d'Acheri, a very curious inſtruction which biſhop Theonas compoſed for the uſe of Lucian.

[134] Lactantius de M. P. c. 10.

and his colleagues frequently conferred the moſt important offices on thoſe perſons, who avowed their abhorrence for the worſhip of the gods, but who had diſplayed abilities proper for the ſervice of the ſtate. The biſhops held an honourable rank in their reſpective provinces, and were treated with diſtinction and reſpect, not only by the people, but by the magiſtrates themſelves. Almoſt in every city, the ancient churches were found inſufficient to contain the increaſing multitude of proſelytes; and in their place more ſtately and capacious edifices were erected for the public worſhip of the faithful. The corruption of manners and principles, ſo forcibly lamented by Euſebius[135], may be conſidered, not only as a conſequence, but as a proof, of the liberty, which the Chriſtians enjoyed and abuſed under the reign of Diocletian. Proſperity had relaxed the nerves of diſcipline. Fraud, envy, and malice, prevailed in every congregation. The preſbyters aſpired to the epiſcopal office, which every day became an object more worthy of their ambition. The biſhops, who contended with each other for eccleſiaſtical pre-eminence, appeared by their conduct to claim a ſecular and tyrannical power in the church; and the lively faith which ſtill diſtinguiſhed the Chriſtians from the Gentiles, was ſhewn much leſs in their lives, than in their controverſial writings.

Progreſs of zeal and ſuperſtition among the Pagans.

Notwithſtanding this ſeeming ſecurity, an attentive obſerver might diſcern ſome ſymptoms that threatened the church with a more violent perſecution than any which ſhe had yet endured. The zeal and rapid progreſs of the Chriſtians awakened the Polytheiſts from their ſupine indifference in the cauſe of thoſe deities, whom cuſtom and education had taught them to revere. The mutual provocations of a religious war, which had already continued above two hundred years, exaſperated the animoſity of the contending

[135] Euſebius, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. viii. c. 1. The reader who conſults the original, will not accuſe me of heightening the picture. Euſebius was about ſixteen years of age at the acceſſion of the emperor Diocletian.

parties.

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parties. The Pagans were incenſed at the raſhneſs of a recent and obſcure ſect, which preſumed to accuſe their countrymen of error, and to devote their anceſtors to eternal miſery. The habits of juſtifying the popular mythology againſt the invectives of an implacable enemy, produced in their minds ſome ſentiments of faith and reverence for a ſyſtem which they had been accuſtomed to conſider with the moſt careleſs levity. The ſupernatural powers aſſumed by the church inſpired at the ſame time terror and emulation. The followers of the eſtabliſhed religion intrenched themſelves behind a ſimilar fortification of prodigies; invented new modes of ſacrifice, of expiation, and of initiation [136]; attempted to revive the credit of their expiring oracles [137]; and liſtened with eager credulity to every impoſtor, who flattered their prejudices by a tale of wonders [138]. Both parties ſeemed to acknowledge the truth of thoſe miracles which were claimed by their adverſaries; and while they were contented with aſcribing them to the arts of magic, and to the power of dæmons, they mutually concurred in reſtoring and eſtabliſhing the reign of ſuperſtition [139]. Philoſophy, her moſt dangerous enemy, was now converted into her moſt uſeful ally. The groves of the academy, the gardens of Epicurus, and even the portico of the

[136] We might quote, among a great number of inſtances, the myſterious worſhip of Mythras, and the Taurobolia; the latter of which became faſhionable in the time of the Antonines (See a Diſſertation of M. de Boze, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. ii. p. 443.). The romance of Apuleius is as full of devotion as of ſatire.

[137] The impoſtor Alexander very ſtrongly recommended the oracle of Trophonius at Mallos, and thoſe of Apollo, at Claros and Miletus (Lucian, tom. ii. p. 236. Edit. Reitz). The laſt of theſe, whoſe ſingular hiſtory would furniſh a very curious epiſode, was conſulted by Diocletian before he publiſhed his edicts of perſecution (Lactantius, de M. P. c. 11).

[138] Beſides the ancient ſtories of Pythagoras and Ariſteas; the cures performed at the ſhrine of Æſculapius, and the fables related of Apollonius of Tyana, were frequently oppoſed to the miracles of Chriſt; though I agree with Dr. Lardner (ſee Teſtimonies, vol. iii. p. 253. 352.), that when Philoſtratus compoſed the life of Apollonius, he had no ſuch intention.

[139] It is ſeriouſly to be lamented, that the Chriſtian fathers, by acknowledging the ſupernatural, or, as they deem it, the infernal, part of Paganiſm, deſtroy with their own hands the great advantage which we might otherwiſe derive from the liberal conceſſions of our adverſaries.

Stoics, were almoſt deſerted, as ſo many different ſchools of ſcepticiſm or impiety [140]: and many among the Romans were deſirous that the writings of Cicero ſhould be condemned and ſuppreſſed by the authority of the ſenate [141]. The prevailing ſect of the new Platonicians judged it prudent to connect themſelves with the prieſts, whom perhaps they deſpiſed, againſt the Chriſtians, whom they had reaſon to fear. Theſe faſhionable philoſophers proſecuted the deſign of extracting allegorical wiſdom from the fictions of the Greek poets; inſtituted myſterious rites of devotion for the uſe of their choſen diſciples; recommended the worſhip of the ancient gods as the emblems or miniſters of the Supreme Deity, and compoſed againſt the faith of the goſpel many elaborate treatiſes [142], which have ſince been committed to the flames by the prudence of orthodox emperors [143].

Maximian and Galerius puniſh a few Chriſtian ſoldiers.

Although the policy of Diocletian and the humanity of Conſtantius inclined them to preſerve inviolate the maxims of toleration, it was ſoon diſcovered that their two aſſociates, Maximian and Galerius, entertained the moſt implacable averſion for the name and religion of the Chriſtians. The minds of thoſe princes had never been enlightened by ſcience; education had never ſoftened their temper. They owed their greatneſs to their ſwords, and in their moſt elevated fortune they ſtill retained their ſuperſti-

[140] Julian (p. 301. Edit. Spanheim) expreſſes a pious joy, that the providence of the gods had extinguiſhed the impious ſects, and for the moſt part deſtroyed the books of the Pyrrhonians and Epicureans, which had been very numerous, ſince Epicurus himſelf compoſed no leſs than 300 volumes. See Diogenes Laertius, l. x. c. 26.

[141] Cumque alios audiam muſſitare indignanter, et dicere opportere ſtatui per Senatum, aboleantur ut hæc ſcripta, quibus Chriſtiana Religio comprobetur, et vetuſtatis opprimatur auctoritas. Arnobius adverſus Gentes, l. iii. p. 103, 104. He adds very properly, Erroris convincite Ciceronem . . . nam intercipere ſcripta, et publicatam velle ſubmergere lectionem, non eſt Deum defendere ſed veritatis teſtificationem timere.

[142] Lactantius (Divin. Inſtitut. l. v. c. 2, 3.) gives a very clear and ſpirited account of two of theſe philoſophic adverſaries of the faith. The large treatiſe of Porphyry againſt the Chriſtians conſiſted of thirty books, and was compoſed in Sicily about the year 270.

[143] See Socrates, Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. i. c. 9. and Codex Juſtinian, l. i. tit. i. l. 3.

tious

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tious prejudices of ſoldiers and peaſants. In the general adminiſtration of the provinces they obeyed the laws which their benefactor had eſtabliſhed; but they frequently found occaſions of exerciſing within their camp and palaces a ſecret perſecution [144], for which the imprudent zeal of the Chriſtians ſometimes offered the moſt ſpecious pretences. A ſentence of death was executed upon Maximilianus, an African youth, who had been produced by his own father before the magiſtrate as a ſufficient and legal recruit, but who obſtinately perſiſted in declaring, that his conſcience would not permit him to embrace the profeſſion of a ſoldier [145]. It could ſcarcely be expected that any government ſhould ſuffer the action of Marcellus the Centurion to paſs with impunity. On the day of a public feſtival, that officer threw away his belt, his arms, and the enſigns of his office, and exclaimed with a loud voice, that he would obey none but Jeſus Chriſt the eternal King, and that he renounced for ever the uſe of carnal weapons, and the ſervice of an idolatrous maſter. The ſoldiers, as ſoon as they recovered from their aſtoniſhment, ſecured the perſon of Marcellus. He was examined in the city of Tingi by the preſident of that part of Mauritania; and as he was convicted by his own confeſſion, he was condemned and beheaded for the crime of deſertion [146]. Examples of ſuch a nature favour much leſs of religious perſecution than of martial or even

[144] Euſebius. l. viii. c. 4. c. 17. He limits the number of military martyrs, by a remarkable expreſſion (σπανιως τουτων εις πυκναι δευτερος), of which neither his Latin nor French tranſlator have rendered the energy. Notwithſtanding the authority of Euſebius, and the ſilence of Lactantius, Ambroſe, Sulpicius, Oroſius, &c. it has been long believed, that the Thebæan legion, conſiſting of 6000 Chriſtians, ſuffered martyrdom, by the order of Maximian, in the valley of the Penine Alps. The ſtory was firſt publiſhed about the middle of the vth century, by Eucherius, biſhop of Lyons, who received it from certain perſons, who received it from Iſaac biſhop of Geneva, who is ſaid to have received it from Theodore biſhop of Octodurum. The Abbey of St. Maurice ſtill ſubſiſts, a rich monument of the credulity of Sigiſmond, king of Burgundy. See an excellent Diſſertation in the xxxvith volume of the Bibliothéque Raiſonnée, p. 427—454.

[145] See the Acta Sincera, p. 299. The accounts of his martyrdom, and of that of Marcellus, bear every mark of truth and authenticity.

[146] Acta Sincera, p. 302.

civil

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civil law: but they ſerved to alienate the mind of the emperors, to juſtify the ſeverity of Galerius, who diſmiſſed a great number of Chriſtian officers from their employments; and to authorize the opinion, that a ſect of enthuſiaſts, which avowed principles ſo repugnant to the public ſafety, muſt either remain uſeleſs, or would ſoon become dangerous, ſubjects of the empire.

Galerius prevails on Diocletian to begin a general perſecution.

After the ſucceſs of the Perſian war had raiſed the hopes and the reputation of Galerius, he paſſed a winter with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia; and the fate of Chriſtianity became the object of their ſecret conſultations[147]. The experienced emperor was ſtill inclined to purſue meaſures of lenity; and though he readily conſented to exclude the Chriſtians from holding any employments in the houſehold or the army, he urged in the ſtrongeſt terms the danger as well as cruelty of ſhedding the blood of thoſe deluded fanatics. Galerius at length extorted from him the permiſſion of ſummoning a council, compoſed of a few perſons the moſt diſtinguiſhed in the civil and military departments of the ſtate. The important queſtion was agitated in their preſence, and thoſe ambitious courtiers eaſily diſcerned, that it was incumbent on them to ſecond, by their eloquence, the importunate violence of the Cæſar. It may be preſumed, that they inſiſted on every topic which might intereſt the pride, the piety, or the fears, of their ſovereign in the deſtruction of Chriſtianity. Perhaps they repreſented, that the glorious work of the deliverance of the empire was left imperfect, as long as an independent people was permitted to ſubſiſt and multiply in the heart of the provinces. The Chriſtians (it might ſpeciouſly be alleged), renouncing the gods and the inſtitutions of Rome, had conſtituted a diſtinct republic, which might yet be ſuppreſſed before it had acquired any military force: but which was already governed

[147] De M. P. c. 11. Lactantius (or whoever was the author of this little treatiſe) was, at that time, an inhabitant of Nicomedia; but it ſeems difficult to conceive how he could acquire ſo accurate a knowledge of what paſſed in the Imperial cabinet.

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by its own laws and magiſtrates, was poſſeſſed of a public treaſure, and was intimately connected in all its parts, by the frequent aſſemblies of the biſhops, to whoſe decrees their numerous and opulent congregations yielded an implicit obedience. Arguments like theſe, may ſeem to have determined the reluctant mind of Diocletian to embrace a new ſyſtem of perſecution: but though we may ſuſpect, it is not in our power to relate, the ſecret intrigues of the palace, the private views and reſentments, the jealouſy of women or eunuchs, and all thoſe trifling but deciſive cauſes which ſo often influence the fate of empires, and the counſels of the wiſeſt monarchs[148].

Demolition of the church of Nicomedia. A. D. 303. 23d Feb.

The pleaſure of the emperors was at length ſignified to the Chriſtians, who, during the courſe of this melancholy winter, had expected, with anxiety, the reſult of ſo many ſecret conſultations. The twenty-third of February, which coincided with the Roman feſtival of the Terminalia[149], was appointed (whether from accident or deſign) to ſet bounds to the progreſs of Chriſtianity. At the earlieſt dawn of day, the Prætorian præfect[150], accompanied by ſeveral generals, tribunes, and officers of the revenue, repaired to the principal church of Nicomedia, which was ſituated on an eminence in the moſt populous and beautiful part of the city. The doors were inſtantly broke open; they ruſhed into the ſanctuary; and as they ſearched in vain for ſome viſible object of worſhip, they were obliged to content themſelves with committing to the flames the volumes of holy ſcripture. The miniſters of Diocletian were followed by a numerous body of guards and pioneers, who marched

[148] The only circumſtance which we can diſcover, is the devotion and jealouſy of the mother of Galerius. She is deſcribed by Lactantius, as Deorum montium cultrix; mulier admodum ſuperſtitioſa. She had a great influence over her ſon, and was offended by the diſregard of ſome of her Chriſtian ſervants.

[149] The worſhip and feſtival of the God Terminus are elegantly illuſtrated by M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. i. p. 50.

[150] In our only MS. of Lactantius, we read *profectus*; but reaſon, and the authority of all the critics, allow us, inſtead of that word, which deſtroys the ſenſe of the paſſage, to ſubſtitute *præfectus*.

in

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;n order of battle, and were provided with all the inſtruments uſed in the deſtruction of fortified cities. By their inceſſant labour, a ſacred edifice, which towered above the Imperial palace, and had long excited the indignation and envy of the Gentiles, was in a few hours levelled with the ground [151].

The next day the general edict of perſecution was publiſhed [152]; and though Diocletian, ſtill averſe to the effuſion of blood, had moderated the fury of Galerius, who propoſed, that every one refuſing to offer ſacrifice, ſhould immediately be burnt alive, the penalties inflicted on the obſtinacy of the Chriſtians might be deemed ſufficiently rigorous and effectual. It was enacted, that their churches, in all the provinces of the empire, ſhould be demoliſhed to their foundations; and the puniſhment of death was denounced againſt all who ſhould preſume to hold any ſecret aſſemblies for the purpoſe of religious worſhip. The philoſophers, who now aſſumed the unworthy office of directing the blind zeal of perſecution, had diligently ſtudied the nature and genius of the Chriſtian religion; and as they were not ignorant that the ſpeculative doctrines of the faith were ſuppoſed to be contained in the writings of the prophets, of the evangeliſts, and of the apoſtles, they moſt probably ſuggeſted the order, that the biſhops and preſbyters ſhould deliver all their ſacred books into the hands of the magiſtrates; who were commanded, under the ſevereſt penalties, to burn them in a public and ſolemn manner. By the ſame edict, the property of the church was at once confiſcated; and the ſeveral parts of which it might conſiſt, were either ſold to the higheſt bidder, united to the Imperial domain, beſtowed on the cities and corporations, or granted to the ſolicitations of rapacious courtiers. After taking ſuch effec-

The firſt edict againſt the Chriſtians. 24th of February.

[151] Lactantius de M. P. c. 12, gives a very lively picture of the deſtruction of the church.

[152] Moſheim (p. 922—926.), from many ſcattered paſſages of Lactantius and Euſebius, has collected a very juſt and accurate notion of this edict; though he ſometimes deviates into conjecture and refinement.

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tual measures to abolish the worship, and to dissolve the government, of the Christians, it was thought necessary to subject to the most intolerable hardships the condition of those perverse individuals who should still reject the religion of Nature, of Rome, and of their ancestors. Persons of a liberal birth were declared incapable of holding any honours or employments; slaves were for ever deprived of the hopes of freedom, and the whole body of the people were put out of the protection of the law. The judges were authorized to hear and to determine every action that was brought against a Christian. But the Christians were not permitted to complain of any injury which they themselves had suffered; and thus those unfortunate sectaries were exposed to the severity, while they were excluded from the benefits, of public justice. This new species of martyrdom, so painful and lingering, so obscure and ignominious, was, perhaps, the most proper to weary the constancy of the faithful: nor can it be doubted that the passions and interest of mankind were disposed on this occasion to second the designs of the emperors. But the policy of a well-ordered government must sometimes have interposed in behalf of the oppressed Christians; nor was it possible for the Roman princes entirely to remove the apprehension of punishment, or to connive at every act of fraud and violence, without exposing their own authority and the rest of their subjects to the most alarming dangers[153].

Zeal and punishment of a Christian.

This edict was scarcely exhibited to the public view, in the most conspicuous place of Nicomedia, before it was torn down by the hands of a Christian, who expressed, at the same time, by the bitterest invectives, his contempt as well as abhorrence for such impious and tyrannical governors. His offence, according to the mildest laws, amounted to treason, and deserved death. And if it

[153] Many ages afterwards, Edward I. practised, with great success, the same mode of persecution against the clergy of England. See Hume's History of England, vol. ii. p. 300, last 4to edition.

be

be true that he was a perſon of rank and education, thoſe circumſtances could ſerve only to aggravate his guilt. He was burnt, or rather roaſted, by a ſlow fire; and his executioners, zealous to revenge the perſonal inſult which had been offered to the emperors, exhauſted every refinement of cruelty, without being able to ſubdue his patience, or to alter the ſteady and inſulting ſmile which in his dying agonies he ſtill preſerved in his countenance. The Chriſtians, though they confeſſed that his conduct had not been ſtrictly conformable to the laws of prudence, admired the divine fervour of his zeal; and the exceſſive commendations which they laviſhed on the memory of their hero and martyr, contributed to fix a deep impreſſion of terror and hatred in the mind of Diocletian[154].

Fire of the palace of Nicomedia imputed to the Chriſtians.

His fears were ſoon alarmed by the view of a danger from which he very narrowly eſcaped. Within fifteen days the palace of Nicomedia, and even the bedchamber of Diocletian, were twice in flames; and though both times they were extinguiſhed without any material damage, the ſingular repetition of the fire was juſtly conſidered as an evident proof that it had not been the effect of chance or negligence. The ſuſpicion naturally fell on the Chriſtians; and it was ſuggeſted, with ſome degree of probability, that thoſe deſperate fanatics, provoked by their preſent ſufferings, and apprehenſive of impending calamities, had entered into a conſpiracy with their faithful brethren, the eunuchs of the palace, againſt the lives of two emperors, whom they deteſted as the irreconcilable enemies of the church of God. Jealouſy and reſentment prevailed in every breaſt, but eſpecially in that of Diocletian. A great number of perſons, diſtinguiſhed either by the offices which they had filled, or by the favour which they had enjoyed, were thrown into priſon.

[154] Lactantius only calls him quidam, etſi non recte, magno tamen animo, &c. c. 12. Euſebius (l. viii. c. 5.) adorns him with ſecular honours. Neither have condeſcended to mention his name; but the Greeks celebrate his memory under that of John. See Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. v. part ii. p. 320.

Every

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Every mode of torture was put in practice, and the court, as well as city, was polluted with many bloody executions[155]. But as it was found impoſſible to extort any diſcovery of this myſterious tranſaction, it ſeems incumbent on us either to preſume the innocence, or to admire the reſolution, of the ſufferers. A few days afterwards Galerius haſtily withdrew himſelf from Nicomedia, declaring, that if he delayed his departure from that devoted palace, he ſhould fall a ſacrifice to the rage of the Chriſtians. The eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, from whom alone we derive a partial and imperfect knowledge of this perſecution, are at a loſs how to account for the fears and danger of the emperors. Two of theſe writers, a Prince and a Rhetorician, were eye-witneſſes of the fire of Nicomedia. The one aſcribes it to lightning, and the divine wrath; the other affirms, that it was kindled by the malice of Galerius himſelf[156].

Execution of the firſt edict.

As the edict againſt the Chriſtians was deſigned for a general law of the whole empire, and as Diocletian and Galerius, though they might not wait for the conſent, were aſſured of the concurrence, of the weſtern princes, it would appear more conſonant to our ideas of policy, that the governors of all the provinces ſhould have received ſecret inſtructions to publiſh, on one and the ſame day, this declaration of war within their reſpective departments. It was at leaſt to be expected, that the convenience of the public highways and eſtabliſhed poſts would have enabled the emperors to tranſmit their orders with the utmoſt diſpatch from the palace of Nicomedia to the extremities of the Roman world; and that they would not have ſuffered fifty days to elapſe, before the edict was publiſhed

[155] Lactantius de M. P. c. 13, 14. Potentiſſimi quondam Eunuchi necati, per quos Palatium et ipſe conſtabat. Euſebius (l. viii. c. 6.) mentions the cruel extortions of the eunuchs, Gorgonius and Dorotheus, and of Anthimius, biſhop of Nicomedia; and both thoſe writers deſcribe, in a vague but tragical manner, the horrid ſcenes which were acted even in the Imperial preſence.

[156] See Lactantius, Euſebius, and Conſtantine, ad Cœtum Sanctorum, c. 25. Euſebius confeſſes his ignorance of the cauſe of the fire.

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in Syria, and near four months before it was ſignified to the cities of Africa [157]. This delay may perhaps be imputed to the cautious temper of Diocletian, who had yielded a reluctant conſent to the meaſures of perſecution, and who was deſirous of trying the experiment under his more immediate eye, before he gave way to the diſorders and diſcontent which it muſt inevitably occaſion in the diſtant provinces. At firſt, indeed, the magiſtrates were reſtrained from the effuſion of blood; but the uſe of every other ſeverity was permitted and even recommended to their zeal; nor could the Chriſtians, though they cheerfully reſigned the ornaments of their churches, reſolve to interrupt their religious aſſemblies, or to deliver their ſacred books to the flames. The pious obſtinacy of Felix, an African biſhop, appears to have embarraſſed the ſubordinate miniſters of the government. The curator of his city ſent him in chains to the proconſul. The proconſul tranſmitted him to the Prætorian præfect of Italy; and Felix, who diſdained even to give an evaſive anſwer, was at length beheaded at Venuſia, in Lucania, a place on which the birth of Horace has conferred fame [158]. This precedent, and perhaps ſome Imperial reſcript, which was iſſued in conſequence of it, appeared to authorize the governors of provinces, in puniſhing with death the refuſal of the Chriſtians to deliver up their ſacred books. There were undoubtedly many perſons who embraced this opportunity of obtaining the crown of martyrdom; but there were likewiſe too many who purchaſed an ignominious life, by diſcovering and betraying the holy ſcripture into the hands of infidels. A great number even of biſhops and preſbyters acquired, by this criminal compliance, the opprobrious epithet of *Traditors*; and their offence was productive of much

[157] Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſt. tom. v. part i. p. 43.

[158] See the Acta Sincera of Ruinart, p. 353; thoſe of Fœlix of Thibara, or Tibiur, appear much leſs corrupted than in the other editions, which afford a lively ſpecimen of legendary licence.

preſent

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preſent ſcandal, and of much future diſcord, in the African Church [159].

Demolition of the churches.

The copies, as well as the verſions of ſcripture, were already ſo multiplied in the empire, that the moſt ſevere inquiſition could no longer be attended with any fatal conſequences; and even the ſacrifice of thoſe volumes, which, in every congregation, were preſerved for public uſe, required the conſent of ſome treacherous and unworthy Chriſtians. But the ruin of the churches was eaſily effected by the authority of the government, and by the labour of the Pagans. In ſome provinces, however, the magiſtrates contented themſelves with ſhutting up the places of religious worſhip. In others, they more literally complied with the terms of the edict; and after taking away the doors, the benches, and the pulpit, which they burnt, as it were in a funeral pile, they completely demoliſhed the remainder of the edifice [160]. It is perhaps to this melancholy occaſion, that we ſhould apply a very remarkable ſtory, which is related with ſo many circumſtances of variety and improbability, that it ſerves rather to excite than to ſatisfy our curioſity. In a ſmall town in Phrygia, of whoſe name as well as ſituation we are left ignorant, it ſhould ſeem, that the magiſtrates and the body of the people had embraced the Chriſtian faith; and as ſome reſiſtance might be apprehended to the execution of the edict, the governor of the province was ſupported by a numerous detachment of legionaries. On their approach the citizens threw themſelves into the church, with the reſolution either of defending by arms that ſacred edifice, or of periſhing in its ruins. They

[159] See the firſt book of Optatus of Milevis againſt the Donatiſts at Paris, 1700. Edit. Dupin. He lived under the reign of Valens.

[160] The ancient monuments, publiſhed at the end of Optatus, p. 261, &c. deſcribe, in a very circumſtantial manner, the proceedings of the governors in the deſtruction of churches. They made a minute inventory of the plate, &c. which they found in them. That of the church of Cirta, in Numidia, is ſtill extant. It conſiſted of two chalices of gold, and ſix of ſilver; ſix urns, one kettle, ſeven lamps, all likewiſe of ſilver; beſides a large quantity of braſs utenſils, and wearing apparel.

indignantly

indignantly rejected the notice and permiſſion which was given them, to retire, till the ſoldiers, provoked by their obſtinate refuſal, ſet fire to the building on all ſides, and conſumed, by this extraordinary kind of martyrdom, a great number of Phrygians, with their wives and children [161].

Subſequent edicts.

Some ſlight diſturbances, though they were ſuppreſſed almoſt as ſoon as excited, in Syria and the frontiers of Armenia, afforded the enemies of the church a very plauſible occaſion to inſinuate, that thoſe troubles had been ſecretly fomented by the intrigues of the biſhops, who had already forgotten their oſtentatious profeſſions of paſſive and unlimited obedience [162]. The reſentment, or the fears, of Diocletian, at length tranſported him beyond the bounds of moderation, which he had hitherto preſerved, and he declared, in a ſeries of cruel edicts, his intention of aboliſhing the Chriſtian name. By the firſt of theſe edicts, the governors of the provinces were directed to apprehend all perſons of the eccleſiaſtical order; and the priſons, deſtined for the vileſt criminals, were ſoon filled with a multitude of biſhops, preſbyters, deacons, readers, and exorciſts. By a ſecond edict, the magiſtrates were commanded to employ every method of ſeverity, which might reclaim them from their odious ſuperſtition, and oblige them to return to the eſtabliſhed worſhip of the gods. This rigorous order was extended, by a ſubſequent

[161] Lactantius (Inſtitut. Divin. v. 11.) confines the calamity to the *conventiculum*, with its congregation. Euſebius (viii. 11.) extends it to a whole city, and introduces ſomething very like a regular ſiege. His ancient Latin tranſlator, Rufinus, adds the important circumſtance of the permiſſion given to the inhabitants of retiring from thence. As Phrygia reached to the confines of Iſauria, it is poſſible that the reſtleſs temper of thoſe independent Barbarians may have contributed to this misfortune.

[162] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 6. M. de Valois (with ſome probability) thinks that he has diſcovered the Syrian rebellion in an oration of Libanius; and that it was a raſh attempt of the tribune Eugenius, who with only five hundred men ſeized Antioch, and might perhaps allure the Chriſtians by the promiſe of religious toleration. From Euſebius (l. ix. c. 8.) as well as from Moſes of Chorene (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 77, &c.) it may be inferred, that Chriſtianity was already introduced into Armenia.

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edict, to the whole body of Chriſtians, who were expoſed to a violent and general perſecution [163]. Inſtead of thoſe ſalutary reſtraints, which had required the direct and ſolemn teſtimony of an accuſer, it became the duty as well as the intereſt of the Imperial officers, to diſcover, to purſue, and to torment, the moſt obnoxious among the faithful. Heavy penalties were denounced againſt all who ſhould preſume to ſave a proſcribed ſectary from the juſt indignation of the gods, and of the emperors. Yet, notwithſtanding the ſeverity of this law, the virtuous courage of many of the Pagans, in concealing their friends or relations, affords an honourable proof, that the rage of ſuperſtition had not extinguiſhed in their minds the ſentiments of nature and humanity [164].

General idea of the perſecution

Diocletian had no ſooner publiſhed his edicts againſt the Chriſtians, than, as if he had been deſirous of committing to other hands the work of perſecution, he diveſted himſelf of the Imperial purple. The character and ſituation of his colleagues and ſucceſſors ſometimes urged them to enforce, and ſometimes inclined them to ſuſpend, the execution of theſe rigorous laws; nor can we acquire a juſt and diſtinct idea of this important period of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, unleſs we ſeparately conſider the ſtate of Chriſtianity, in the different parts of the empire, during the ſpace of ten years, which elapſed between the firſt edicts of Diocletian, and the final peace of the church.

in the weſtern provinces under Conſtantius and Conſtantine;

The mild and humane temper of Conſtantius was averſe to the oppreſſion of any part of his ſubjects. The principal offices of his palace were exerciſed by Chriſtians. He loved their perſons, eſteemed their fidelity, and entertained not any diſlike to their religious principles. But as long as Conſtantius remained in the ſubordinate

[163] See Moſheim, p. 938; the text of Euſebius very plainly ſhews, that the governors, whoſe powers were enlarged, not reſtrained, by the new laws, could puniſh with death the moſt obſtinate Chriſtians, as an example to their brethren.

[164] Athanaſius, p. 833. ap. Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. v. part i. p. 90.

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ſtation of Cæſar, it was not in his power openly to reject the edicts of Diocletian, or to diſobey the commands of Maximian. His authority contributed, however, to alleviate the ſufferings which he pitied and abhorred. He conſented, with reluctance, to the ruin of the churches; but he ventured to protect the Chriſtians themſelves from the fury of the populace, and from the rigour of the laws. The provinces of Gaul (under which we may probably include thoſe of Britain) were indebted for the ſingular tranquillity which they enjoyed, to the gentle interpoſition of their ſovereign[165]. But Datianus, the preſident or governor of Spain, actuated either by zeal or policy, choſe rather to execute the public edicts of the emperors, than to underſtand the ſecret intentions of Conſtantius; and it can ſcarcely be doubted, that his provincial adminiſtration was ſtained with the blood of a few martyrs[166]. The elevation of Conſtantius to the ſupreme and independent dignity of Auguſtus, gave a free ſcope to the exerciſe of his virtues, and the ſhortneſs of his reign did not prevent him from eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of toleration, of which he left the precept and the example to his ſon Conſtantine. His fortunate ſon, from the firſt moment of his acceſſion, declaring himſelf the protector of the church, at length deſerved the appellation of the firſt emperor, who publicly profeſſed and eſtabliſhed the Chriſtian religion. The motives of his converſion, as they may variouſly be deduced from benevolence, from policy, from convic-

[165] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 13. Lactantius de M. P. c. 15. Dodwell (Diſſertat. Cyprian. xi. 75.) repreſents them as inconſiſtent with each other. But the former evidently ſpeaks of Conſtantius in the ſtation of Cæſar, and the latter of the ſame prince in the rank of Auguſtus.

[166] Datianus is mentioned in Gruter's Inſcriptions, as having determined the limits between the territories of Pax Julia, and thoſe of Ebora, both cities in the ſouthern part of Luſitania. If we recollect the neighbourhood of thoſe places to Cape St. Vincent, we may ſuſpect that the celebrated deacon and martyr of that name has been inaccurately aſſigned by Prudentius, &c. to Saragoſſa, or Valentia. See the pompous hiſtory of his ſufferings, in the Memoires de Tillemont, tom. v. part ii. p. 58—85. Some critics are of opinion, that the department of Conſtantius, as Cæſar, did not include Spain, which ſtill continued under the immediate juriſdiction of Maximian.

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tion, or from remorſe; and the progreſs of the revolution, which, under his powerful influence, and that of his ſons, rendered Chriſtianity the reigning religion of the Roman empire, will form a very intereſting and important chapter in the ſecond volume of this hiſtory. At preſent it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that every victory of Conſtantine was productive of ſome relief or benefit to the church.

in Italy and Africa, under Maximian and Severus;

The provinces of Italy and Africa experienced a ſhort but violent perſecution. The rigorous edicts of Diocletian were ſtrictly and cheerfully executed by his aſſociate Maximian, who had long hated the Chriſtians, and who delighted in acts of blood and violence. In the autumn of the firſt year of the perſecution, the two emperors met at Rome to celebrate their triumph; ſeveral oppreſſive laws appear to have iſſued from their ſecret conſultations, and the diligence of the magiſtrates was animated by the preſence of their ſovereigns. After Diocletian had diveſted himſelf of the purple, Italy and Africa were adminiſtered under the name of Severus, and were expoſed, without defence, to the implacable reſentment of his maſter Galerius. Among the martyrs of Rome, Adauctus deſerves the notice of poſterity. He was of a noble family in Italy, and had raiſed himſelf, through the ſucceſſive honours of the palace, to the important office of treaſurer of the private demeſnes. Adauctus is the more remarkable for being the only perſon of rank and diſtinction who appears to have ſuffered death, during the whole courſe of this general perſecution [167].

under Maxentius;

The revolt of Maxentius immediately reſtored peace to the churches of Italy and Africa; and the ſame tyrant who oppreſſed every other claſs of his ſubjects, ſhewed himſelf juſt, humane, and even partial, towards the afflicted Chriſtians. He depended on their gratitude and affection, and very naturally preſumed, that the

[167] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 11. Gruter, Inſcript. p. 1171. No. 18. Rufinus has miſtaken the office of Adauctus, as well as the place of his martyrdom.

injuries

injuries which they had ſuffered, and the dangers which they ſtill apprehended from his moſt inveterate enemy, would ſecure the fidelity of a party already conſiderable by their numbers and opulence [168]. Even the conduct of Maxentius towards the biſhops of Rome and Carthage, may be conſidered as the proof of his toleration, ſince it is probable that the moſt orthodox princes would adopt the ſame meaſures with regard to their eſtabliſhed clergy. Marcellus, the former of thoſe prelates, had thrown the capital into confuſion, by the ſevere penance which he impoſed on a great number of Chriſtians, who, during the late perſecution, had renounced or diſſembled their religion. The rage of faction broke out in frequent and violent ſeditions; the blood of the faithful was ſhed by each other's hands, and the exile of Marcellus, whoſe prudence ſeems to have been leſs eminent than his zeal, was found to be the only meaſure capable of reſtoring peace to the diſtracted church of Rome [169]. The behaviour of Menſurius, biſhop of Carthage, appears to have been ſtill more reprehenſible. A deacon of that city had publiſhed a libel againſt the emperor. The offender took refuge in the epiſcopal palace, and though it was ſomewhat early to advance any claims of eccleſiaſtical immunities, the biſhop refuſed to deliver him up to the officers of juſtice. For this treaſonable reſiſtance, Menſurius was ſummoned to court, and inſtead of

[168] Euſebius, l. viii. c. 14. But as Maxentius was vanquiſhed by Conſtantine, it ſuited the purpoſe of Lactantius to place his death among thoſe of the perſecutors.

[169] The epitaph of Marcellus is to be found in Gruter, Inſcript. p. 1172. No. 3. and it contains all that we know of his hiſtory. Marcellinus and Marcellus, whoſe names follow in the liſt of popes, are ſuppoſed by many critics to be different perſons; but the learned Abbé de Longuerre was convinced that they were one and the ſame.

Veridicus rector lapſis quia crimina flere
Prædixit miſeris, fuit omnibus hoſtis amarus.
Hinc furor, hinc odium; ſequitur diſcordia, lites,
Seditio, cædes; ſolvuntur fœdera pacis.
Crimen ob alterius, Chriſtum qui in pace negavit
Finibus expulſus patriæ eſt feritate Tyranni.
Hæc breviter Damaſus voluit comperta referre:
Marcelli populus meritum cognoſcere poſſet.

We may obſerve that Damaſus was made biſhop of Rome, A. D. 366.

receiving

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receiving a legal ſentence of death or baniſhment, he was permitted, after a ſhort examination, to return to his dioceſe [170]. Such was the happy condition of the Chriſtian ſubjects of Maxentius, that whenever they were deſirous of procuring for their own uſe any bodies of martyrs, they were obliged to purchaſe them from the moſt diſtant provinces of the Eaſt. A ſtory is related of Aglae, a Roman lady, deſcended from a conſular family, and poſſeſſed of ſo ample an eſtate, that it required the management of ſeventy-three ſtewards. Among theſe, Boniface was the favourite of his miſtreſs; and as Aglae mixed love with devotion, it is reported that he was admitted to ſhare her bed. Her fortune enabled her to gratify the pious deſire of obtaining ſome ſacred relics from the Eaſt. She intruſted Boniface with a conſiderable ſum of gold, and a large quantity of aromatics; and her lover, attended by twelve horſemen and three covered chariots, undertook a remote pilgrimage, as far as Tarſus in Cilicia [171].

in Illyricum and the Eaſt under Galerius and Maximian.

The ſanguinary temper of Galerius, the firſt and principal author of the perſecution, was formidable to thoſe Chriſtians, whom their misfortunes had placed within the limits of his dominions; and it may fairly be preſumed, that many perſons of a middle rank, who were not confined by the chains either of wealth or of poverty, very frequently deſerted their native country, and ſought a refuge in the milder climate of the Weſt. As long as he commanded only the armies and provinces of Illyricum, he could with difficulty either find or make a conſiderable number of martyrs, in a warlike country, which had entertained the miſſionaries of the goſpel with more coldneſs and reluctance than any other part of the empire [172]. But

[170] Optatus contr. Donatiſt. l. i. c. 17, 18.

[171] The Acts of the Paſſion of St. Boniface, which abound in miracles and declamation, are publiſhed by Ruinart (p. 283—291.), both in Greek and Latin, from the authority of very ancient manuſcripts.

[172] During the four firſt centuries, there exiſt few traces of either biſhops or biſhoprics in the weſtern Illyricum. It has been thought probable that the primate of Milan extended his juriſdiction over Sirmium, the capital of that great province. See the Geographia Sacra of Charles de St. Paul, p. 68—76. with the obſervations of Lucas Holſtenius.

when

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when Galerius had obtained the ſupreme power and the government of the Eaſt, he indulged in their fulleſt extent his zeal and cruelty, not only in the provinces of Thrace and Aſia, which acknowledged his immediate juriſdiction; but in thoſe of Syria, Paleſtine, and Egypt, where Maximin gratified his own inclination, by yielding a rigorous obedience to the ſtern commands of his benefactor [173]. The frequent diſappointments of his ambitious views, the experience of ſix years of perſecution, and the ſalutary reflections which a lingering and painful diſtemper ſuggeſted to the mind of Galerius, at length convinced him that the moſt violent efforts of deſpotiſm are inſufficient to extirpate a whole people, or to ſubdue their religious prejudices. Deſirous of repairing the miſchief that he had occaſioned, he publiſhed in his own name, and in thoſe of Licinius and Conſtantine, a general edict, which, after a pompous recital of the Imperial titles, proceeded in the following manner:

Galerius publiſhes an edict of toleration.

" Among the important cares which have occupied our mind for " the utility and preſervation of the empire, it was our intention to " correct and re-eſtabliſh all thing according to the ancient laws " and public diſcipline of the Romans. We were particularly " deſirous of reclaiming, into the way of reaſon and nature, the " deluded Chriſtians, who had renounced the religion and cere- " monies inſtituted by their fathers; and preſumptuouſly deſpiſing " the practice of antiquity, had invented extravagant laws and " opinions according to the dictates of their fancy, and had col- " lected a various ſociety from the different provinces of our em- " pire. The edicts which we have publiſhed to enforce the wor- " ſhip of the gods, having expoſed many of the Chriſtians to danger " and diſtreſs, many having ſuffered death, and many more, who

[173] The viiith book of Euſebius, as well as the ſupplement concerning the martyrs of Paleſtine, principally relate to the perſecution of Galerius and Maximin. The general lamentations with which Lactantius opens the vth book of his Divine Inſtitutions, allude to their cruelty.

" ſtill

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" ſtill perſiſt in their impious folly, being left deſtitute of *any* " public exerciſe of religion, we are diſpoſed to extend to thoſe " unhappy men the effects of our wonted clemency. We permit " them therefore freely to profeſs their private opinions, and " to aſſemble in their conventicles without fear or moleſtation, " provided always that they preſerve a due reſpect to the eſtabliſhed " laws and government. By another reſcript we ſhall ſignify our " intentions to the judges and magiſtrates; and we hope that our " indulgence will engage the Chriſtians to offer up their prayers to " the deity whom they adore, for our ſafety and proſperity, for " their own, and for that of the republic [174]." It is not uſually in the language of edicts and manifeſtos, that we ſhould ſearch for the real character or the ſecret motives of princes; but as theſe were the words of a dying emperor, his ſituation, perhaps, may be admitted as a pledge of his ſincerity.

Peace of the church.

When Galerius ſubſcribed this edict of toleration, he was well aſſured that Licinius would readily comply with the inclinations of his friend and benefactor, and that any meaſures in favour of the Chriſtians, would obtain the approbation of Conſtantine. But the emperor would not venture to inſert in the preamble the name of Maximin, whoſe conſent was of the greateſt importance, and who ſucceeded a few days afterwards to the provinces of Aſia. In the firſt ſix months, however, of his new reign, Maximin affected to adopt the prudent counſels of his predeceſſor; and though he never condeſcended to ſecure the tranquillity of the church by a public edict, Sabinus, his Prætorian præfect, addreſſed a circular letter to all the governors and magiſtrates of the provinces, expatiating on the Imperial clemency, acknowledging the invincible obſtinacy of the

[174] Euſebius (l. viii. c. 17.) has given us a Greek verſion, and Lactantius (de M. P. c. 34.), the Latin original, of this memorable edict. Neither of theſe writers ſeems to recollect how directly it contradicts whatever they have juſt affirmed of the remorſe and repentance of Galerius.

Chriſtians,

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Chriſtians, and directing the officers of juſtice to ceaſe their ineffectual proſecutions, and to connive at the ſecret aſſemblies of thoſe enthuſiaſts. In conſequence of theſe orders, great numbers of Chriſtians were releaſed from priſon, or delivered from the mines. The confeſſors, ſinging hymns of triumph, returned into their own countries; and thoſe who had yielded to the violence of the tempeſt, ſolicited with tears of repentence their re-admiſſion into the boſom of the church[175].

Maximin prepares to renew the perſecution.

But this treacherous calm was of ſhort duration, nor could the Chriſtians of the Eaſt place any confidence in the character of their ſovereign. Cruelty and ſuperſtition were the ruling paſſions of the ſoul of Maximin. The former ſuggeſted the means, the latter pointed out the objects, of perſecution. The emperor was devoted to the worſhip of the gods, to the ſtudy of magic, and to the belief of oracles. The prophets or philoſophers, whom he revered as the favourites of heaven, were frequently raiſed to the government of provinces, and admitted into his moſt ſecret councils. They eaſily convinced him, that the Chriſtians had been indebted for their victories to their regular diſcipline, and that the weakneſs of polytheiſm had principally flowed from a want of union and ſubordination among the miniſters of religion. A ſyſtem of government was therefore inſtituted, which was evidently copied from the policy of the church. In all the great cities of the empire, the temples were repaired and beautified by the order of Maximin; and the officiating prieſts of the various deities were ſubjected to the authority of a ſuperior pontiff, deſtined to oppoſe the biſhop, and to promote the cauſe of paganiſm. Theſe pontiffs acknowledged, in their turn, the ſupreme juriſdiction of the metropolitans or high-prieſts of the province, who acted as the immediate vicegerents of the emperor himſelf. A white robe was the enſign of their dignity; and

[175] Euſebius, l. ix. c. 1. He inſerts the epiſtle of the præfect.

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theſe new prelates were carefully ſelected from the moſt noble and opulent families. By the influence of the magiſtrates, and of the ſacerdotal order, a great number of dutiful addreſſes were obtained, particularly from the cities of Nicomedia, Antioch, and Tyre, which artfully repreſented the well-known intentions of the court as the general ſenſe of the people; ſolicited the emperor to conſult the laws of juſtice rather than the dictates of his clemency; expreſſed their abhorrence of the Chriſtians, and humbly prayed that thoſe impious ſectaries might at leaſt be excluded from the limits of their reſpective territories. The anſwer of Maximin to the addreſs which he obtained from the citizens of Tyre is ſtill extant. He praiſes their zeal and devotion in terms of the higheſt ſatisfaction, deſcants on the obſtinate impiety of the Chriſtians, and betrays, by the readineſs with which he conſents to their baniſhment, that he conſidered himſelf as receiving, rather than as conferring, an obligation. The prieſts as well as the magiſtrates were empowered to enforce the execution of his edicts, which were engraved on tables of braſs; and though it was recommended to them to avoid the effuſion of blood, the moſt cruel and ignominious puniſhments were inflicted on the refractory Chriſtians [176].

End of the perſecutions.

The Aſiatic Chriſtians had every thing to dread from the ſeverity of a bigoted monarch, who prepared his meaſures of violence with ſuch deliberate policy. But a few months had ſcarcely elapſed, before the edicts publiſhed by the two weſtern emperors obliged Maximin to ſuſpend the proſecution of his deſigns: the civil war which he ſo raſhly undertook againſt Licinius employed all his attention; and the defeat and death of Maximin ſoon delivered the church from the laſt and moſt implacable of her enemies [177].

In

[176] See Euſebius, l. viii. c. 14, l. ix. c. 2—8. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Theſe writers agree in repreſenting the arts of Maximin: but the former relates the execution of ſeveral martyrs, while the latter expreſsly affirms, occidi ſervos Dei vetuit.

[177] A few days before his death, he publiſhed a very ample edict of toleration, in which

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Probable account of the ſufferings of the martyrs and confeſſors.

In this general view of the perſecution, which was firſt authorized by the edicts of Diocletian, I have purpoſely refrained from deſcribing the particular ſufferings and deaths of the Chriſtian martyrs. It would have been an eaſy taſk, from the hiſtory of Euſebius, from the declamations of Lactantius, and from the moſt ancient acts, to collect a long ſeries of horrid and diſguſtful pictures, and to fill many pages with racks and ſcourges, with iron hooks, and red hot beds, and with all the variety of tortures which fire and ſteel, ſavage beaſts and more ſavage executioners, could inflict on the human body. Theſe melancholy ſcenes might be enlivened by a crowd of viſions and miracles deſtined either to delay the death, to celebrate the triumph, or to diſcover the relics, of thoſe canonized ſaints who ſuffered for the name of Chriſt. But I cannot determine what I ought to tranſcribe, till I am ſatisfied how much I ought to believe. The graveſt of the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, Euſebius himſelf, indirectly confeſſes, that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has ſuppreſſed all that could tend to the diſgrace, of religion [178]. Such an acknowledgment will naturally excite a ſuſpicion, that a writer who has ſo openly violated one of the fundamental laws of hiſtory, has not paid a very ſtrict regard to the obſervance of the other: and the ſuſpicion will derive additional credit from the character of Euſebius, which was leſs tinctured with credulity, and more practiſed in the arts of courts, than that of almoſt any of his contemporaries. On ſome particular occaſions, when the magiſtrates were exaſperated by ſome perſonal motives of intereſt or reſentment, when the zeal of the martyrs urged them to forget the

which he imputes all the ſeverities which the Chriſtians ſuffered to the judges and governors, who had miſunderſtood his intentions. See the Edict in Euſebius, l. ix. c. 10.

[178] Such is the *fair* deduction from two remarkable paſſages in Euſebius, l. viii. c. 2. and de Martyr. Paleſtin. c. 12. The prudence of the hiſtorian has expoſed his own character to cenſure and ſuſpicion. It was well known that he himſelf had been thrown into priſon; and it was ſuggeſted that he had purchaſed his deliverance by ſome diſhonourable compliance. The reproach was urged in his lifetime, and even in his preſence, at the council of Tyre. See Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. viii. part i. p. 67.

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rules of prudence, and perhaps of decency, to overturn the altars, to pour out imprecations againſt the emperors, or to ſtrike the judge as he ſat on his tribunal, it may be preſumed that every mode of torture, which cruelty could invent or conſtancy could endure, was exhauſted on thoſe devoted victims[179]. Two circumſtances, however, have been unwarily mentioned, which inſinuate that the general treatment of the Chriſtians, who had been apprehended by the officers of juſtice, was leſs intolerable than it is uſually imagined to have been. 1. The confeſſors who were condemned to work in the mines, were permitted, by the humanity or the negligence of their keepers, to build chapels, and freely to profeſs their religion in the midſt of thoſe dreary habitations[180]. 2. The biſhops were obliged to check and to cenſure the forward zeal of the Chriſtians, who voluntarily threw themſelves into the hands of the magiſtrates. Some of theſe were perſons oppreſſed by poverty and debts, who blindly ſought to terminate a miſerable exiſtence by a glorious death. Others were allured by the hope, that a ſhort confinement would expiate the ſins of a whole life; and others again were actuated by the leſs honourable motive of deriving a plentiful ſubſiſtence, and perhaps a conſiderable profit, from the alms which the charity of the faithful beſtowed on the priſoners[181]. After the church had triumphed over all her enemies, the intereſt as well as vanity of the captives prompted them to magnify the merit of their reſpective ſuffering. A convenient diſtance of time or place gave an ample ſcope to the progreſs of fiction; and the frequent inſtances which might be alleged of holy

[179] The ancient, and perhaps authentic, account of the ſufferings of Tarachus, and his companions (Acta Sincera Ruinart, p. 419—448), is filled with ſtrong expreſſions of reſentment and contempt, which could not fail of irritating the magiſtrate. The behaviour of Ædeſius to Hierocles, præfect of Egypt, was ſtill more extraordinary, λογοις τε και εργοις τον δικαστην . . . περιεκαλων. Euſeb. de Martyr. Paleſtin. c. 5.

[180] Euſeb. de Martyr. Paleſtin. c. 13.

[181] Auguſtin. Collat. Carthagin. Dei, iii. c. 13. ap. Tillemont, Memoires Eccleſiaſtiques, tom. v. part i. p. 46. The controverſy with the Donatiſts has reflected ſome, though perhaps a partial, light on the hiſtory of the African church.

martyrs,

martyrs, whoſe wounds had been inſtantly healed, whoſe ſtrength had been renewed, and whoſe loſt members had miraculouſly been reſtored, were extremely convenient for the purpoſe of removing every difficulty, and of ſilencing every objection. The moſt extravagant legends, as they conduced to the honour of the church, were applauded by the credulous multitude, countenanced by the power of the clergy, and atteſted by the ſuſpicious evidence of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory.

Number of martyrs.

The vague deſcriptions of exile and impriſonment, of pain and torture, are ſo eaſily exaggerated or ſoftened by the pencil of an artful orator, that we are naturally induced to inquire into a fact of a more diſtinct and ſtubborn kind; the number of perſons who ſuffered death in conſequence of the edicts publiſhed by Diocletian, his aſſociates, and his ſucceſſors. The recent legendaries record whole armies and cities, which were at once ſwept away by the undiſtinguiſhing rage of perſecution. The more ancient writers content themſelves with pouring out a liberal effuſion of looſe and tragical invectives, without condeſcending to aſcertain the preciſe number of thoſe perſons who were permitted to ſeal with their blood their belief of the goſpel. From the hiſtory of Euſebius, it may however be collected, that only nine biſhops were puniſhed with death; and we are aſſured, by his particular enumeration of the martyrs of Paleſtine, that no more than ninety-two Chriſtians were entitled to that honourable appellation[182]. As we are unacquainted with the degree of

[182] Euſebius de Martyr. Paleſtin. c. 13. He cloſes his narration, by aſſuring us, that theſe were the martyrdoms inflicted in Paleſtine, during the *whole* courſe of the perſecution. The vth chapter of his viiith book, which relates to the province of Thebais in Egypt, may ſeem to contradict our moderate computation; but it will only lead us to admire the artful management of the hiſtorian. Chuſing for the ſcene of the moſt exquiſite cruelty, the moſt remote and ſequeſtered country of the Roman empire, he relates, that in Thebais, from ten to one hundred perſons had frequently ſuffered martyrdom in the ſame day. But when he proceeds to mention his own journey into Egypt, his language inſenſibly becomes more cautious and moderate. Inſtead of a large, but definite number, he ſpeaks of many Chriſtians (πλειους); and moſt artfully ſelects two ambiguous words (ικανους

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of epiſcopal zeal and courage which prevailed at that time, it is not in our power to draw any uſeful inferences from the former of theſe facts: but the latter may ſerve to juſtify a very important and probable concluſion. According to the diſtribution of Roman provinces, Paleſtine may be conſidered as the ſixteenth part of the Eaſtern empire[183]; and ſince there were ſome governors, who from a real or affected clemency had preſerved their hands unſtained with the blood of the faithful[184], it is reaſonable to believe, that the country which had given birth to Chriſtianity produced at leaſt the ſixteenth part of the martyrs who ſuffered death within the dominions of Galerius and Maximin; the whole might conſequently amount to about fifteen hundred, a number which, if it is equally divided between the ten years of the perſecution, will allow an annual conſumption of one hundred and fifty martyrs. Allotting the ſame proportion to the provinces of Italy, Africa, and perhaps Spain, where, at the end of two or three years, the rigour of the penal laws was either ſuſpended or aboliſhed, the multitude of Chriſtians in the Roman empire, on whom a capital puniſhment was inflicted by a judicial ſentence, will be reduced to ſomewhat leſs than two thouſand perſons. Since it cannot be doubted that the Chriſtians were more numerous, and their enemies more exaſperated, in the time of Diocletian than they had ever been in any former perſecution, this probable and

(ιστορησαμεν, and υπομειναντας), which may ſignify either what he had ſeen, or what he had heard; either the expectation, or the execution, of the puniſhment. Having thus provided a ſecure evaſion, he commits the equivocal paſſage to his readers and tranſlators; juſtly conceiving that their piety would induce them to prefer the moſt favourable ſenſe. There was perhaps ſome malice in the remark of Theodorus Metochita, that all who, like Euſebius, had been converſant with the Egyptians, delighted in an obſcure and intricate ſtyle. (See Valeſius ad loc.)

[183] When Paleſtine was divided into three, the præfecture of the Eaſt contained forty-eight provinces. As the ancient diſtinctions of nations were long ſince aboliſhed, the Romans diſtributed the provinces, according to a general proportion of their extent and opulence.

[184] Ut gloriari poſſint nullum ſe innocentium peremiſſe, nam et ipſe audivi aliquos gloriantes, quia adminiſtratio ſua, in hâc parte, fuerit incruenta. Lactant. Inſtitut. Divin. v. 11.

moderate

moderate computation may teach us to eſtimate the number of primitive ſaints and martyrs who ſacrificed their lives for the important purpoſe of introducing Chriſtianity into the world.

Concluſion.

We ſhall conclude this chapter by a melancholy truth, which obtrudes itſelf on the reluctant mind; that even admitting, without heſitation or enquiry, all that hiſtory has recorded, or devotion has feigned, on the ſubject of martyrdoms, it muſt ſtill be acknowledged, that the Chriſtians, in the courſe of their inteſtine diſſentions, have inflicted far greater ſeverities on each other, than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels. During the ages of ignorance which followed the ſubverſion of the Roman empire in the Weſt, the biſhops of the Imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin church. The fabric of ſuperſtition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reaſon, was at length aſſaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the ſixteenth century, aſſumed the popular character of reformers. The church of Rome defended by violence the empire which ſhe had acquired by fraud; a ſyſtem of peace and benevolence was ſoon diſgraced by proſcriptions, wars, maſſacres, and the inſtitution of the holy office. And as the reformers were animated by the love of civil, as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own intereſt with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the ſword the terrors of ſpiritual cenſures. In the Netherlands alone, more than one hundred thouſand of the ſubjects of Charles the Fifth are ſaid to have ſuffered by the hand of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is atteſted by Grotius[185], a man of genius and learning, who preſerved his moderation amidſt the fury of contending ſects, and who compoſed the annals of his own age and country, at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means

[185] Grot. Annal. de Rebus Belgicis, l. i. p. 12. Edit. fol.

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of intelligence, and increaſed the danger of detection. If we are obliged to ſubmit our belief to the authority of Grotius, it muſt be allowed, that the number of Proteſtants, who were executed in a ſingle province and a ſingle reign, far exceeded that of the primitive martyrs in the ſpace of three centuries, and of the Roman empire. But if the improbability of the fact itſelf ſhould prevail over the weight of evidence; if Grotius ſhould be convicted of exaggerating the merit and ſufferings of the Reformers[186]; we ſhall be naturally led to inquire, what confidence can be placed in the doubtful and imperfect monuments of ancient credulity; what degree of credit can be aſſigned to a courtly biſhop, and a paſſionate declaimer, who, under the protection of Conſtantine, enjoyed the excluſive privilege of recording the perſecutions inflicted on the Chriſtians by the vanquiſhed rivals or diſregarded predeceſſors of their gracious ſovereign.

[186] Fra-Paolo (Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. iii.) reduces the number of Belgic martyrs to 50,000. In learning and moderation, Fra-Paolo was not inferior to Grotius. The priority of time gives ſome advantage to the evidence of the former, which he loſes on the other hand by the diſtance of Venice from the Netherlands.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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